

Working In Africa

Regional Description

Recognising the potential in the fastest developing country in Africa Macdonald and Company has opened a South African office, based in the thriving centre of Johannesburg.

This new presence ensures not only that our international candidate base is exposed to a wider pool of potential employers but also that we are able to offer our clients a diverse range of candidates.

With our global reach growing every day, we are able to introduce candidates to some of the most exciting projects on the continent, including the enormous activity surrounding the 2010 Football World Cup. Working in South Africa provides a real opportunity to play an important role in a developing country, where the value of property has enjoyed a 250% increase in the last 5 years. Home to no less than 11 official languages, South Africa will provide inspiration and rare challenges to those who have grown weary of the 'sameness' of their project work – as well as one of the most pleasant year round climates imaginable.

Working closely with the RICS, we are able to introduce only the most talented and experienced of South African candidates to the international market place.

Countries Served from this Office

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| ■ South Africa | ■ Ghana | ■ Gambia |
| ■ Kenya | ■ Zimbabwe | ■ Botswana |
| ■ Egypt | ■ Namibia | ■ Mozambique |
| ■ Sudan | ■ Uganda | ■ Nigeria |
| ■ Madagascar | | |

Historic & Geographical Description

■ South Africa

With a population of just over 46 million, South Africa is made up of 9 Provinces, including KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo (sharing a boarder with Zimbabwe and Mozambique), the North-West (sharing a boarder with Botswana), the Northern Cape (sharing a boarder with Namibia), Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State and Gauteng. Whilst KwaZulu Natal certainly has the highest population, it is in the Gauteng Province where the highest density of citizens live, with 19.2% of the total population occupying just 1.4% of the country's land area. This province is home to Johannesburg and Pretoria, the commercial and governmental capitals of the country.

The 11 official languages are attributed to the 9 original tribes, as well as English and Afrikaans. Local dialects, however, tend to incorporate several languages, and it is safe to say that in 50 years time there will be a truly 'New South African' language. At present, you can easily get by with only English as a language.

The vastness of the country means that weather and landscape changes dramatically, from deserts in the Karoo, to the tropics of the North Eastern Coast. South Africa was established as a trading point, joining as it does two of the earth's most powerful oceans: the Indian and the Atlantic. With a good 50% of the country existing 4,500 ft above sea level, South Africa is well known for its sprawling Savannahs (the highveld), game farms, mountain ranges and 4 'Blue Flag' beaches.



Clients

In Africa, Macdonald & Company serves the same client-base as in the United Kingdom. These range from international consultancies, to local developers, to property funds and institutions. With the current rate of development within the country, there are a huge variety of positions available. Due to BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) laws, however it is worth bearing in mind that many of the companies which we represent in South Africa may not be able to consider foreign workers as they are yet to fulfil the government's criteria in terms of locally trained staff.

Legal Requirements

■ Immigration

The country is experiencing a huge skill shortage within the construction and property industry, due both to unprecedented growth and the tendency of local skilled staff to look for international experience. However, South Africa remains notoriously difficult to obtain a work permit for as it has so often been targeted as the African haven for illegal immigrants and opportunists. Only the sectors of Engineering, Medicine and Information Technology enjoy less stringent rules. This said; the government is currently in the process of reviewing immigration laws pertinent to several other industries, financing and construction included.

It will most certainly be necessary for you to find a consultant or legal aid to represent you when immigrating to a new country, or gaining work permit. In African countries, the sooner the enquires are initiated the better, as the process can be time consuming. The office responsible for the issuing of work permits in South Africa is the Department of Home Affairs.

Contact Details:

Department of Home Affairs

Chief Directorate: Immigration Services

Postal address:
Private Bag X114
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

Physical address:
Civitas Building
242 Struben Street
Pretoria

Telephone: +27(0)12 314 8011

Fax: +27(0)12 325 3351

In brief, to qualify for residence in South Africa as a worker, you will need the following:-

- Be within the age group of 18 to 51.
- You must be in possession of a permanent offer of employment made by a South African registered company
- The position offered must be commensurate with your qualifications and experience
- Your prospective employer must motivate why a South African citizen or permanent resident cannot fill or be trained to fill the position
- Your prospective employer must submit proof - for example, press clippings of advertisements placed over a period of at least one month in national newspapers - that the post has been advertised and that no suitable South African has applied, unless it is obvious that a South African would be unsuitable for the post (for example, a key managerial post in the South African branch of an international firm)
- If professionally qualified, you must register with the appropriate South African bodies
- A non-refundable application fee is payable, and you must apply abroad

Relocating to South Africa

■ Relocation

All the information regarding moving to and working in South Africa can be found at www.safrika.info

Your relocation will depend largely on how long you plan to stay in South Africa. For anything over a 14 month period, it might well be worth considering shipping your household goods to the country. From most European countries this can take 4 to 12 weeks, depending on the shipper you use and how much you are willing to spend. Relocation agents can also be hired to help find the right place to rent in the right area.

In a climate which encourages international investment, you shouldn't have too much trouble buying property in Southern Africa. However, the rental market is extremely active, and provides the flexibility and diversity which often suits contract and international workers. Unfortunately, the bulk of rental properties are unfurnished. When choosing accommodation, remember that security developments often add value in terms of swimming pools, gymnasiums and other perks such as 24 hour security and off street parking. Access to main roads and highways is also of paramount importance in a country with little structured public transport.

Typical Rental Values:

Johannesburg (Northern Suburbs)

Furnished 1 room apartment	=	R3,000
Unfurnished 2 bedroom apartment	=	R5,500
Furnished 2 bedroom apartment	=	R8,000

Cape Town

Furnished 1 room apartment	=	R3,200
Unfurnished 2 bedroom apartment	=	R5,000
Furnished 2 bedroom apartment	=	R8,500

■ Living

Getting Around

See http://www.places.co.za/html/traveli_trans.html

Whilst taxis and trains do exist on certain routes, the most reliable form of transport in South Africa is by car. The road infrastructure in South Africa is extensive and well maintained, and driving is on the left of the road. A British licence is accepted in South Africa, although the AA advises that all International visitors obtain an International licences, which can facilitate much speedier services when it comes to providing accident insurances.

■ Schooling

The school year runs on calendar year from January. Both private and public (state run) schooling is available, but it is highly advised to first research the schools in the area you plan to settle before making a decision. A useful website is: <http://www.school.za>.

State run schools often offer the same level of attention and learning content for a fraction of the cost as most state run schools cost between R6000 and R10,000 per year, and private schools often charge in excess of R30,000 per year. Possibly the greatest benefit of private schooling is the diversity of extra-curricular activities which are usually on offer.

Home schooling is also an option in South Africa, although strict and international standards must be adhered to, both in terms of content and social interaction.

■ Currency and Cost of Living

The South African Rand is made up of 100 cents. You will find coins of 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5, as well as notes of R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200. Whilst South Africa has enjoyed a relatively stable currency over the last 12 months (at around 12:1 to the Pound Sterling), the Rand is sometimes subject to drastic fluctuation.

Whilst the cost of foods in supermarkets and clothing in high street shops is comparable to Britain, there are certainly many markets throughout the country where extremely low prices can be negotiated for various goods. The luxuries, which are so highly taxed in Europe and force high prices, such as cigarettes & alcohol do not face the same 'Sin Tax' in South Africa and so are much more affordable. Alcohol can be bought 7 days a week, from certain supermarket chains and from dedicated alcohol stores.

Your cost of living will certainly depend on the standards which you are accustomed. However, property rental, entertaining costs and luxuries such as visits to hair dressing salons etc is generally cheaper in South Africa.

■ Working

The most important website for you to visit before considering a move to South Africa would be that of the home office, on:

<http://www.home-affairs.gov.za>,

and in particular:

http://www.home-affairs.gov.za/service_detail.asp?id=113.

Another particularly useful link is:

http://www.southafrica.info/public_services/foreigners/work_seekers/workpermits.htm

Typical working contacts in South Africa include 10 public holidays per annum and 15 days paid leave. Annual bonuses are up to your employer, but usually come in the form of a '13th cheque' at Christmas time. It is essential to obtain your own medical insurance, or become medically insured through your employer's policy, as state funded hospitals are far and few between and can be chronically under-funded.

Taxation can be investigated on www.sars.co.za, which supplies a PDF file pertaining to all tax matters for foreign workers, but is generally comparable to the tax structure of many Asian countries. Chinese workers are eligible for certain benefits, which can also be investigated on the South African Revenue Services' web site.