

Guidelines for Honorary Consuls in Bhutan



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimphu

August 2019

Section I Introduction

1. States appoint Honorary Consuls in another State to promote consular relations and commerce amongst others. Towards this objective, the Royal Government will also accept appointment of Honorary Consuls by another state subject to the provisions of this guideline.
2. This guideline outlines the process of appointment, roles and functions of the Honorary Consul in Bhutan, and their privileges and immunities.

Section II Procedure for Appointment

1. The appointment of Honorary Consul shall be based on an agreement between the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and the government of the sending State, as outlined in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 .
2. The approval of the RGoB must be sought by the sending State to appoint an Honorary Consul in Bhutan through a diplomatic Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Diplomatic Mission of the sending State to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), RGoB. The proposal to appoint an Honorary Consul should be supported by adequate justifications.
3. The RGoB will convey its decision on the proposal through a diplomatic Note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Diplomatic Mission of the sending State.
4. Upon receiving the Letter of Commission from the sending State, the RGoB shall issue an Exequatur signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs authorizing the Honorary Consul to exercise his/her functions.

Section III Criteria

1. A proposed candidate for the post of Honorary Consul in Bhutan should be a Bhutanese citizen. He/She must be, above 25 years of age with good repute and standing.
2. Civil servants and public post holders shall not be eligible for the post of Honorary Consul.
3. A proposed candidate should not be Honorary Consul of another state.

Section IV
Classification of Consular Posts

1. The sending state will initially appoint the candidate as Honorary Consul. Redesignation of the Honorary Consul as Honorary Consul General shall be subject to the agreement of the Royal Government.
2. The official premises of the Honorary Consul should be addressed as ‘The Office of the Honorary Consul/Honorary Consul General of to the Kingdom of Bhutan’

Section V
Consular Jurisdiction

1. The consular jurisdiction of the Honorary Consul shall be subject to the consent of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Section VI
Functions of Honorary Consuls

1. Honorary Consuls shall exercise his/her functions from the date of the grant of the Exequatur.
2. Apart from their primary consular functions, the Honorary Consul shall promote trade, commerce, and people to people contact between Bhutan and the Sending State
3. Honorary Consuls shall not perform political and diplomatic functions on behalf of the sending State.

Section VII
Privileges and immunities

1. Privileges and immunities of Honorary Consuls shall be extended in accordance with Chapter III of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 and relevant national laws and regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
2. Privileges and immunities are exclusive to the individual and do not extend to their family members or support staff.
3. Exemption from customs duties shall be granted to specified articles/items imported for the consular post’s official use as certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
4. The Office of the Honorary Consul shall be allowed to purchase limited quantity of duty free alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for special representational events as approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. The Honorary Consuls shall be issued with a Duty Free access card to avail duty free facilities for personal use in Thimphu in accordance with regulations of the Ministry of Finance.

Section VIII

Use of national flag, coat-of-arms & vehicle flags

1. National flag of sending States and coat-of-arms may be displayed at the consular premises with prior approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. Use or display of coat-of-arms, flags, flag shafts and any other symbol of the sending State on any mode of conveyance of the Honorary Consul shall not be permitted at all times.

Section IX

Protection of the Consular Premises and Archives

1. The Royal Government, where deemed necessary, may provide protection to consular premises from intrusion, damage or impairment of dignity, provided the consular premises is maintained separately and used exclusively for the exercise of consular functions. This shall not apply to the private residence of the Honorary Consuls.
2. The archives and documents of the of the Honorary Consul shall be inviolable at all times, provided that they are kept separate from other papers and documents and, in particular, from the private correspondence of the Honorary Consul.

Section X

Renewal and Termination

1. Honorary Consuls shall be appointed for a period of three years. A request to renew the term of the Honorary Consuls must be communicated through the diplomatic channel prior to expiry of the term. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may recommend to the Royal Government of his/her reappointment based on an assessment of the degree of engagement.
2. Functions of Honorary Consuls shall come to an end on:
 - a. Notification by the sending State to the RGoB.

- b. Notification by the Royal Government to the sending State. The Royal Government is under no obligation to give reasons to the sending State for its decision.