

International programs for start- ups and entrepreneurship

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Start-up Denmark , Denmark

Denmark offers a start-up visa for anyone that has an innovative business idea, particularly if it can create jobs. It allows you to reside in Denmark for up to two years. The start-up visa scheme in Denmark requires your business to be approved by a Danish Business Authority panel of experts, and that you have DKK 138,648 (around 21,000 USD) in disposable funds to prove your ability to support yourself while in the country.

The minimum amount required is higher for families. There is also a DKK 1,900 application fee, and a limit of 75 approved applications per year. This visa type may be extended perpetually in three-year increments. Visa holders enjoy visa-free travel in the Schengen area for up to 90 days within the past 180 days period.

<https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Work/Start-up-Denmark>

Digital Nomad Visa, Estonia

Estonia's digital nomad visa program is an exciting option alongside their existing startup visa program, which opens the country to remote workers and lowers the barrier to entry in terms of capital.

It is the only digital nomad visa program that was not designed specifically due to Covid-19 in 2020, and as such is viewed as a more permanent program that plays into Estonia's general strategy of positioning themselves as a startup hub among Baltic states. The visa is aimed at remote workers who make at least €3504/month (about USD \$4000) pre-tax income through remote work or online self-employment. You must be able to document at least 6 months of income meeting the minimum requirements via bank statements, making this a more rigorous application process than Barbados or Bermuda.

The visa is not extendable, but Estonia offers several other programs including residence programs aimed at startup founders and entrepreneurs. Therefore, it may be viewed as a good 'first step' into the country.

<https://e-resident.gov.ee/nomadvisa/>

Start-up Visa, Estonia

Startup Estonia is a government program aimed at establishing wide-impact startups from international founders in Estonia, allowing participants to reside in the country for an extendable 18 months. The program helps applicants through the application process, making it very user-friendly compared to other programs. This is separate from their famous "e-residence" program, and unlike their investor visa program, does not require a large investment locally for approval. The primary requirements for an Estonian startup visa are that you have a disruptive, large-scale business plan (no consultancies or small dev shops) which has been approved by the Startup Estonia Startup Committee, €160 for each month that you plan to be in the country and an insurance policy covering at least €30,000 for the duration of stay. This visa type may be extended for an additional 183 days, for a total of 18 months in the country. Startup visa holders may use the visa to visit the Schengen area for up to 90 days.

<https://startupestonia.ee/visa>

Start-up Entrepreneur Residence Permit, Finland

Finland's startup permit residence program is available for established startup teams only, with the intention to achieve rapid growth within the Finnish economy. Startups are vetted by Business Finland, the government organization responsible for promoting economic development in the country. While criteria are strict and selective, those granted access get extensive support from Business Finland and access to funding opportunities within Finland. Criteria includes a strong business model that can convince Business Finland that it will scale rapidly within the Finnish economy, and a team of at least two team members owning 60%+ of the company. There is no minimum for funds needed to prove ability to sustain team members. The visa can be extended for up to four years, at which point you may apply for a permanent residence permit. Travel within Schengen area is permitted. (90 days within any 180-day period.)

<https://migri.fi/en/start-up-entrepreneur>

Remotely From Georgia, Georgia

Georgia's digital nomad visa is aimed specifically at freelancers, and permits most countries (including the USA) 1 year of residence with relatively low-income requirements or paperwork. This is relevant because while normally any US citizen can visit for 1 year on a tourist visa, that is no longer permitted due to Covid-19. The country is an established hub for digital nomads as well as a commerce-friendly location with low taxes, many long-stay and residency programs, and easy banking for international travellers. The income requirement for this visa is at least USD \$2000 per month from remote work and freelance sources. Health insurance is also required, as well as mandatory quarantine during the Coronavirus pandemic. This visa may be renewable on a case-by-case basis. As the program is young and directly tied to the tourism hit from Covid-19 in 2020, it's not yet clear if this visa program will last beyond 2021-2022.

<https://registration.gov.ge/pub/form/20/ydrv71/>

Self-Employed Visa, Germany

Germany's startup visa scheme allows one year (extendable) residing in Germany. It is targeted at experienced founders who can create jobs in the country. Applicants must submit a business plan and finance information to prove they can fund an innovative job-creating business in Germany. There is no minimum investment in the business, but funds suitable to the business type will be required. If you wish to set up a manual trade or retail business, you can get a self-employed visa if: 1) you can show your business will generate money and contribute to the local community; 2) Prove you have adequate business experience; 3) Show your business idea is sustainable. The visa is issued for three years, after which you can apply for a settlement permit. You'll need to show that your business is delivering the promised benefits. Visa may be renewed after one year, and can be a path to permanent residency or citizenship if other conditions are met. Conditions described here: www.ihk-berlin.de under Document No. 99277

The freelancer visa, Germany

The freelancer visa is similar to the self-employed visa but there are slight differences. Most German freelancer visas are issued for three months but can be extended up to three years if you show your business has been successful. Freelancers are considered a “liberal profession,” and you may be required to obtain a license to practice your trade in some cases. To qualify for a freelancer visa, you must:

1. Prove residency in Germany.
2. Have current health insurance.
3. Have clients in Germany.
4. Make enough money to support yourself.

Although there’s no exact revenue specified that you’ll need to prove, the estimated amount is a minimum of €800 per month.

If you’re over 45, you need to show a monthly pension plan of €1,188.92. If you’re over the age of 67, you’ll need to guarantee an asset amount of €175,068

https://visa.diplo.de/en/index.html#/vib/infoseite?infoseiteUrl=visum_selbstaendig_freiberufler

Start-up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP), Ireland

Ireland's Startup residence scheme, called STEP, is for experienced startup founders and permits residence in the region for an extendable 2 years as a gateway to citizenship. Eligible startup founder(s) must have a business plan which can convince the approving board that it will create at least 10 jobs within the country. Approved applications are expected to generate \$1M within 3-4 years. Companies must target international markets. The residence visa is renewable in 3-year increments. Holders may become Irish citizens if they pass application after eight years in the country, so long as at least half of their time has been spent physically in the country. The visa permits travel with the Schengen area during your residence.

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-work-in-ireland/what-are-my-options-for-working-in-ireland/coming-to-work-for-more-than-90-days/start-up-entrepreneur-programme-step>

Self-Employed Residence Permit, Sweden

Sweden's self-employment visa allows holders to obtain a residence permit for a year at a time, and is a gateway to permanent residence for those who successfully build and operate a business within the country. However, it is highly selective. Self-employment visas in Sweden require proven and extensive experience in the field your proposed business operates in, a strong business plan, and that goods or services be sold within Sweden. This visa type can be extended annually. After 6 years, visa holders may qualify for permanent residence in Sweden. The visa permits travel with the Schengen area during your residence. If you are outside Sweden for more than one year, your residence permit may be revoked or extensions to visa extension denied.

<https://www.verksamt.se/web/international/starting/moving-to-sweden-to-start-a-business>

Innovator Visa, UK

The Innovator visa allows residence in the UK for up to three years, and is targeted at experienced business owners looking to start a novel business in the UK. The primary requirements of the Innovator Visa are that you are approved by an official approving body, which are mostly incubators and research organizations. You must also be able to prove your ability to sustain yourself during your stay (an oddly low minimum of £945 maintained for three months prior to your arrival). For new businesses, you must also have access to \$£50,000+ in investment funding. This visa type may be extended perpetually in three-year increments.

<https://www.gov.uk/innovator-visa>

UK Start-up Visa, UK

The UK Start-up visa is similar to the Innovator Visa, but with a lower time of residence (two years) and lower investment and experience requirements. So long as a UK higher education institution or business organisation (incubator, research organization) has approved your business plan, and you can pay the £363 application fee, you have a shot at approval. This visa type may not be extended. However, you can switch to an Innovator Visa if you meet certain requirements (in short, if your business succeeds).

<https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>

Entrepreneur Visa Program, Spain

The Law on Visas for Entrepreneurs is aimed at investors, entrepreneurs, highly skilled professionals, researchers, and workers performing inter-company business operations, including their spouses and children under 18. The Act facilitates a swiftness of processing, generally establishing a resolve within 10 days for all visa applications relevant to this law. The Residence Visa issued under this law is sufficient to reside in Spain for one year without having to obtain a foreign identity card. The renewal of residency may take place even if absences exist for longer than six months per year in the case of Residency Visas and authorisations for foreign investors and for foreign workers performing inter-company operations abroad or that have established their base of operations in Spain. This Act of residency visa refers to the following: Residency Visas for Capital Investors (RIC); (RIV); Residency Visas for Entrepreneurs and Business Activities (REM - In the case of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial activity is understood as that which is innovative in nature with a special interest to Spain and can count on a favourable report from the Commercial Office where the investor presents the application for the visa). The Entrepreneur Visa is the residence permit granted to non-EU citizens who want to develop their entrepreneurial business activity in Spain. That is, it is a residence permit for two years (with the possibility of renewal at the end of this period) that you can get as long as you set up your business in the Spanish territory, which must be totally innovative and different from what already exists in the market today.

As stated in Law 14/2013, the law that regulates all visas under the entrepreneurs law, for this specific residency the business idea plays a fundamental role when it comes to the application procedure. Your business idea (i.e. the product or service you plan to market in Spain), must strictly comply with 3 main requirements: it must be innovative; must be of special economic interest for Spain and it creates investment opportunities for the country.

<http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Consulados/CIUDADDELCABO/en/InformacionParaExtranjeros/Pages/La-on-Visas-for-Entrepreneurs.aspx> si https://www.immigrationspain.es/en/entrepreneur-visa-in-spain/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-K2MBhC-ARIsAMtLKRv7-S42uWGqxElpvY72CCczlJj9KYP9qT33Vt6uTT5yPTUnqppY_JQaAmS6EALw_wcB

Netherlands Independent Entrepreneur Visa, Netherlands

To qualify for this program, you need a comprehensive business plan that proves your business will add value to the Dutch economy or, if you are a freelancer, that you have Dutch clients. You'll also need to show a net profit of € 1,192.96 per month that needs to be independent and long-term. You also need to score adequately on a points system. The points system is based on your experience, education, entrepreneurship, income amongst other things. US, Japanese and Turkish citizens can take advantage of treaties between their countries and the Netherlands and in some cases, do not need to meet the points threshold. However, you still need to meet the general requirements.

https://ind.nl/en/work/working_in_the_Netherlands/Pages/Self-employed-person.aspx

Start-up Visa Program, Netherlands

<https://business.gov.nl/coming-to-the-netherlands/permits-and-visa/startup-visa>

If you wish to work in the Netherlands as a start-up entrepreneur, you need a residence permit for this. A residence permit as 'start-up' gives ambitious starters a year to start an innovative company in the Netherlands. One condition in this regard is that they are supervised by a reliable supervisor (facilitator) in the Netherlands. The facilitator is a business mentor that is working together with you. This cooperation must be laid down in a (signed) agreement between the start-up entrepreneur and the facilitator. The facilitator provides the start-up entrepreneur with a tailor-made package of support depending on the specific needs of the start-up entrepreneur. The facilitator may, for example, help with operational management, marketing, research and investing acquisition for setting up an innovative business.

There are certain conditions that apply to every start-up: 1) Collaboration with a reliable and experienced facilitator; 2) The product or the service is innovative; 3) The start-up entrepreneur has a (step-by-step) plan in order to move from idea to business; 4) The start-up entrepreneur and the facilitator are both registered in the Trade Register of the Chamber of Commerce; 5) There are sufficient financial means (resources) to be able to reside and live in the Netherlands. Start-ups receive a great deal of support in the Netherlands to develop into successful enterprises.

More information here: https://ind.nl/en/work/working_in_the_Netherlands/Pages/Start-up.aspx

Start-up Visa, Portugal

<https://www.iapmei.pt/Paginas/StartUP-Visa-en.aspx> StartUP Visa is a residence visa for entrepreneurs, which aims to attract to Portugal investment, talent and innovation capacity. By investing and creating qualified employment, entrepreneurs can integrate a startup incubator in Portugal and benefit from all the incentives and support of the StartUP Portugal Program. This program aims to strengthen the innovation ecosystem and to affirm Portugal as an open country to entrepreneurship and to all those who, with their knowledge and capacity for innovation, can bring investment to the portuguese economy, capable of strengthen and enhance national skilled human resources. Beginning 15th March, entrepreneurs from around the world can apply through the online platform. International entrepreneurs wishing to access the StartUP Visa and obtain a residence and work visa must accomplish the following criteria: 1) Intend to develop business activities to produce innovative goods and services; 2) Open or relocate companies and/or projects focused on technology and knowledge, with a perspective of developing innovative products; 3) Have the potential to create qualified employment; 4) Have the potential to attain, 5 years after the incubation period, a turnover over 325.000€ per year, and/or assets value over 325.000€ per year. The evaluation of the economic and innovative potential is made based on the degree of innovation, the scalability of the business, the market potential, the capacity of the management team, the potential for creating qualified employment in Portugal and the relevance of the applicant in the team.

Here are the [StartUP Visa Certified Incubators](#).

Startup Visa, Lithuania

Startup Visa Lithuania was launched in 2017 and it is a procedure that provides a streamlined entry process to the Lithuanian startup ecosystem for innovative non-EU entrepreneurs to build, grow and compete in our booming international community. Startup Visa Lithuania is coordinated by Startup Lithuania - the national startup ecosystem facilitator. The application process can be done online, through an online platform, by following 5 steps. The Program offers many facilitations for the applicants: 10 times lower requirement for initial capital, no specific employment requirements for 3 years; free of charge personal consultations during the relocation process; access to streamlined migration procedure for a temporary residence permit.

<https://startupvisalithuania.com/about-us/>

Latvia Startup Visa, Latvia

Startup visa is offered to all non-EU startup founders who are willing to come and kick-off their startup ideas in Latvia. One startup can have up to 5 founders with a startup visa. The application process takes one month. The visa is given for the period of maximum 3 years and it is spouse and children-friendly. The main criteria for getting Startup visa is to have an innovative (most often technology-based) Startup idea, which is easily scalable and yields a high added value. Ideas are submitted online, by filling in an application form and are selected after the evaluation period. Once your startup is registered and settled in, the team can come from abroad (after receiving a special type of visa reserved for them). Starting from 12th of October 2021, there will be electronic ID card available.

<https://startuplatvia.eu/startup-visa>

Italian Start-up Visa, Italy

<http://italiastartupvisa.mise.gov.it/#direct-application-section-ISV>

The Italian startup visa is highly selective and has accepted relatively few applicants compared to other programs in Europe. Tellingly, a KPMG report recently stated that “Made in Italy” is the 3rd best known brand in the world. By establishing a startup in Italy, you will have the chance to leverage Italy’s most celebrated sectors, add value to your products and scale up your business. You can apply directly for a start-up visa and fill in the application form online. You need to send the application form, a presentation deck, a forecast of costs and revenues, a cover letter and a copy of the passport. Another method is to be accepted by a certified incubator and follow the necessary steps (more information here: <http://italiastartupvisa.mise.gov.it/#certified-incubator-section-ISV>) .

To apply for the visa, you must have: a business model and €50,000 in financial resources for the innovative startup. Before obtaining the visa, you must first secure the Nulla Osta certificate (<http://italiastartupvisa.mise.gov.it/#direct-application-section-ISV>).

You can do this online. If you are applying as part of an incubator, this process will include a declaration from the incubator that they will host your startup. You can then go to your nearest Italian Embassy or Consulate to apply for the startup visa. The Italian Startup Visa is valid for one year. Once you arrive in Italy, you must obtain a one-year residency permit from the local police headquarters within eight days. You can renew this residency permit every two years.

French Tech Visa for Founders, France

<https://lafrenchtech.com/en/how-france-helps-startups/french-tech-visa/visa-for-founders/> .

If you are a tech entrepreneur, there is an accelerated visa scheme that can help you join the ecosystem.

To be eligible for the French Tech Visa for Founders, you must first have:

- Financial resources or a gross annual salary amounting to the French minimum wage (€19,074 as of January 1st, 2019) for the year 2020
- Get formally admitted by one of our French Tech Visa Partner Incubators or Accelerators, etc.) through their regular selection process.

The full list here: <https://lafrenchtech.com/en/how-france-helps-startups/french-tech-visa/visa-for-founders/>.

Your [spouse and family can join you](#), but they will have to apply for a residence permit. The working spouse must prove they have adequate funds to support everyone and proper accommodation. This is determined by the local prefecture.

Red-White-Red Card for Start-up Founders, Austria

The Red-White-Red Card is available to startup founders. It is managed on a points allocation basis with work experience, qualifications, startup funding, capital, language capability and membership of accelerators/incubators all being eligible to earn points. There is a point system that is used in analyzing the application submitted.

One can apply for this program if one can:

1. establish a company in order to develop and launch on the market innovative products, services, processing methods or technologies;
2. to that end submit a consistent business plan for establishing and running that company;
3. personally exert controlling influence on the management of the newly set-up company;
4. can prove capital for the company to be founded amounting to € 50.000 minimum with an equity share of at least 50 %;
5. can score 50 points minimum according to the application criteria (

<https://www.migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/start-up-founders/>) .

As a start-up founder you will be awarded a Red-White-Red Card for the first two years, and subsequently a Red-White-Red Card plus, provided that all legal requirements are met. The Red-White-Red Card plus entitles you to fixed-term settlement and unlimited labour market access (self-employment and gainful employment not limited to a specific employer).