



Startup Visa for Third Country Nationals

On 15 February 2017, Cyprus adopted the Startup Visa (Startup Permit Scheme) for third country nationals interested in residing and investing in innovative businesses in Cyprus.

Specifically, it allows talented entrepreneurs from third countries (Non EU, Non EEA), be it individuals or group of investors, to reside in Cyprus and to establish and/or operate and develop their own innovative startup companies with high growth potential, provided that they meet certain criteria.

Such criteria mainly include: access to EUR 50,000 worth of capital, an innovative scope, principal offices registered in Cyprus, exercise of the management and control of the companies from Cyprus, possession of certain academic qualifications, and very good knowledge of Greek and/or English. The criterion of innovation will be considered to be met if 10% of the operational expenses within a certain year are related to research and development.

This National Plan will initially be applied for two years, during which 150 residence permits are available to be issued.

The Startup VISA Plan consists of two parts:

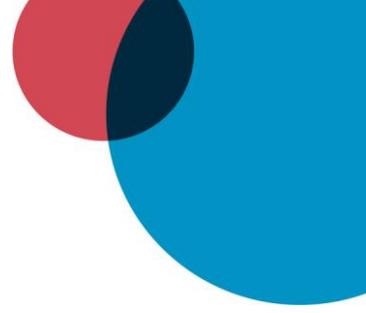
- (i) Individual Startup VISA Plan and
- (ii) Group Startup VISA Plan

A startup group may consist of up to five (5) founders or at least one (1) founder and additional executives (C-level employees entitled to stock options). In any case, the group must not exceed five members. The third country nationals must own, in total, more than 50% of the shares of the company. The founder must have access to EUR 25,000 capital. If the founders are more than two then the capital must amount to at least EUR 50,000 euro in total.

The benefits of the program include:

- Residence and work permit issued by the Government of Cyprus for one year with renewal right for at least another one year
- For the founders: ability to be employed by their own company in Cyprus
- For the executives: ability to be employed by the company of the founders in Cyprus
- Ability to reside in the Republic of Cyprus without a maximum time limit in case of the company's success
- Option of family reunification, in case of company's success
- Ability to hire a certain number of foreign staff without the prior approval of the Labor Division, in case of company's success

The evaluation of success of the company will be performed after two years of operations by the Ministry of Finance or the relevant Authority appointed by the Ministry. During the evaluation a number of factors will be taken into account such as number of employees, taxes paid by the company, exports, income and any further investments in the company.



Our Eurofast team is in the best position to advise and assist you concerning the matter and any further enquiries you may have. We can assist you with the relevant application, the collection of documentation, the drafting of the business plan and the step by step implementation and monitoring of your startup visa issuance procedure.

Your Taxand contacts for further queries are:

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