

HANDBOOK FOR ENTREPRENEURS

'START YOUR BUSINESS' FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

A MANUAL DESIGNED BY

INTEGRATION
Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK ABOUT?

Entrepreneurship has become an essential path to employment for immigrants and refugees in Europe. Moreover, entrepreneurship is also an excellent way of integrating into communities. Therefore, starting your own business is a great way to be an active part in the local community.

However, there are many things to think about when you start a new business. First of all, in order to open your own business you will need to check your residence permit. In most countries, you must have a right of residence to be allowed to become self-employed, as well as have the necessary professional skills and sufficient language skills of the national language.

Moreover, if you want to establish a business, a good business idea and a well-organised business plan are essential. You should also take into consideration whether you have sufficient professional skills and (work) experience. It is essential to be very familiar with the laws governing your field of business and entrepreneurship in general, especially if you run your business administration on your own. It is also important to know your customers and sales methods. Don't forget that there are also risks involved in entrepreneurship. Adequate financing and careful planning are essential. Also, personal characteristics which include risk-taking, outgoingness and a positive attitude will be helpful. Working part-time in the industry that you want to open your business can also help you in gaining these necessary skills.

But no need to worry. This manual will help you develop a plan for your business idea, assess your entrepreneurial potential and it furthermore lists contacts that teach you how to start and/or where to get advice, support and training. We will talk about entrepreneurial competencies, how to legally register your business, how to fund your business, and offer you a step by step guide to your own business start up.



ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES



What skills do I need?

As mentioned above, in order to successfully start your own business you will need some entrepreneurial competencies. These competencies may be personal characteristics, social competencies or professional knowledge. Below, we have listed some competencies that are important. If you see one of the points as your area of strength you can check the box for a better overview of the points that you will need to work on.

Personal characteristics

Most important: a good level of the national language.
You should ask yourself:

- How motivated am I?
- How creative and curious am I?
- How confident do I appear?
- Am I ambitious and disciplined?
- Am I eager for knowledge and willing to learn?
- Can I deal calmly with new situations and how do I react to changes?
- Am I open-minded about new things and friendly to other people?



Social competencies

Useful to have: A good network, good marketing strategy, a customer base. You should ask yourself:

- How communicative am I?
- How responsibly do I act and how reliable am I?
- How persistent am I and how tolerant am I towards other ideas or suggestions?
- Am I a team player?
- How resilient am I?
- Do I have intercultural know-how?

Furthermore: you will need a good understanding of your customer base, which means that you should know what your potential customers want and how to reach them, as well as being able to communicate with them effectively.



Professional skills

When thinking of your business idea, you will also have to think and do some research about the following questions regarding your sector of interest :

- Is my idea already on the market?
- Is it accepted?
- How many competitors do I have?
- How strong is this competition?
- What turnover and profits are achieved, e.g. in relation to the number of employees or the size of the premises.



HOW DO I STRENGTHEN MY SKILLS ?

If you have gained a good overview over the points mentioned above, you will be well prepared to manage the next steps. In case you have realised that you may need some additional information, or you still lack some important skills or you need to improve some of them you could:



Read

Research on books about businesses that can be found in most libraries. You may also read business related articles on the internet, in newspapers and magazines or follow blogs, lectures, media posts and case studies.



Attend training

Find and attend university or privately funded training programs in business management, technical skills or motivation and entrepreneurship.



Learn from successful business people

You should be able to find successful businesspeople who will talk to you about their businesses. If they allow you to visit their business locations, observe them as they work and learn from them. If possible, work as an apprentice in a related successful business. Additionally, read success stories of successful business people. You will easily find them in business journals or online.



Seek help from others

Talk with your friends and family about the areas that need improvement. You could also join a business association, chambers, forums or a volunteer group to discuss the issues with others who are or have been in a similar situation..

WHERE DO I FIND TRAINING COURSES?

If you are still unsure whether you are well prepared to open your own business, you can take part in courses, workshops and training. Even if you do feel prepared, you should do it anyway, it's only going to help. When you are considering enterprising as a career choice, or you wish to start or have started your own business, entrepreneurial career coaching or entrepreneur training can help you strengthen your skills and become a successful entrepreneur and manager of your own business.

Courses, workshops or training may take place in-person as well as online. By selecting your area of interest, you can find available courses on the internet and learn how to register for the courses. You can contact the organizations listed below who will help you strengthen your competences by giving advice or offering courses on the required topics.

The following list contains useful websites with additional information about starting your own business:



Find Links and Tips for Germany on page 6.



Find Links and Tips for Finland on page 7.



Find Links and Tips for Greece on page 8.



Find Links and Tips for Italy on page 9.



GERMANY

Support: Where do I find more Information?

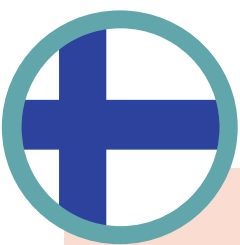
The following list contains useful websites with additional information about starting your own business in Germany:

- Wir gründen in Deutschland: The IQ Department of Migrant Economics; a multilingual web platform helps students, academics and skilled workers from other countries as well as refugees start companies in Germany
- Existenzgründer: Startup workshop from the Federal Ministry of Economics (BMWi) that includes checklists and overviews, a business plan, online training, a tool for creating a business plan, and a founder and entrepreneur lexicon. A guide to national and regional information and consulting services for foreign startup founders
- Anerkennung in Deutschland: Here you can find out how to get your foreign professional qualifications recognized. With the "Recognition Finder," you can find the right office to handle your documents in just a few clicks. You will also find all the important information about the process. In addition, you can call the phone hotline of the Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees, which is available in both German and English.
- Make it in Germany: A multilingual welcome portal for international skilled workers. This portal is operated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. "Make it in Germany" informs skilled workers who are interested in immigrating to explore their career opportunities, and shows them how to create a successful path to Germany; it explains why it is worthwhile to live and work here.
- Behördenwegweiser: BMWi is a database with about 25,000 addresses of public agencies and institutions that provide information, publications, consulting, further education courses, contacts and founder competitions, etc.

Advice: Where can I get advice?

This list contains more websites of organizations that offer advice, (online)trainings or free (online)seminars on founding your own business:

- "Vielfalt gründet" offers seminars in different languages and one only for women about starting your own business. It's free for refugees (otherwise 10€) and you can easily apply via their contact formula.
- Sprungbrett zum Erfolg also offers seminars and coaching online and in person. Coaching usually lasts for 2 months (2x a week). It's free for refugees or if you can get an AVGS-Voucher.
- Singa offers a free mentoring program for business starters where you will have your personal mentor that helps you step by step. They do not have many spaces available but you can try your luck and easily apply for their entrepreneurship program in Berlin or Stuttgart.
- Initiative for self-employed migrants is a Berlin based organization that offers free (online) seminars in English and German on different topics about founding your own business. Simply register for the one you like on their website or send them an email.
- Gründen in Berlin has a lot of useful information on starting your own business as well as a collection of many free online seminars and workshops about business start up held by different organisations. You can easily register on their website.
- Akelei e.V. offers Seminars and Support for Women who want to start their own business. The Seminars are not free but cheaper for unemployed women.
- Gründerinnenportal is helpful if you are looking for more advice or a regional organization you can find a collection of organizations that offer support on this website.



FINLAND

You can flexibly combine starting your business with taking part in entrepreneurship training. Using the Finnish Employment Office services, [TE-palvelut](#), you can find [training courses](#) to become an Entrepreneur. These courses offered by the Employment Office are usually free for unemployed individuals.

[You can start a company](#) in Finland regardless of your nationality. You must have a right of residence in Finland, the necessary professional skills and sufficient Finnish language skills. The process of starting a business is the same as for Finnish citizens. In the business planning phase, you can get free business advice from the Finnish Enterprise Agencies. Free business advice is available to everyone in Finland. Advice is offered, for example, by:

- [Finnish Enterprise Agency \(Uusyrittyskeskus\)](#).
- [Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment](#)
- [Employment and Economic Development Offices \(TE Offices\) \(Työ- ja elinkeinotoimistot, TE-toimistot\)](#).
- [My Enterprise Finland \(Yritys-Suomi\)](#) (through its website and by phone)

If you have a good business idea, contact your nearest [business development agency](#). There, experts will help you develop your business idea, do market research, calculate profitability and survey financing. You can also get support for considering whether to start a company or not. Business advice is given in Finnish and Swedish and also in English, at least in larger towns. Sometimes, it may even be possible to get business advice in other languages.

You can also contact the following links for more input and support:

- [Business development agency](#): There, experts will help you develop your business idea, do market research, calculate profitability, survey financing, get support for considering whether to start a company.
- [Startup Refugees Business Program](#) offers services for refugees and newcomers who are running a business in Finland or who are interested in starting a company, freelancing, or other income-generating activity.
- [Entrepreneurs of Finland](#) is a non-profit organization that offers entrepreneurial stories as a resource for inspiration to support all entrepreneurship enthusiasts in Finland and around the world.
- [Yrityskummit](#): Business Mentors Finland is a nonprofit association, with a national network of experienced entrepreneurs and business managers, offering competence and experience dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through mentorship.
- [YES](#) is Finland's most significant network for the development of entrepreneurship education, which promotes the implementation of entrepreneurship education.



GREECE

If you want to open a business in Greece you will need a tax registration number (AFM), from the local tax collection service, and a social security number (AMKA), from the Social Security Institute. Application forms for residence permits can be obtained from the local municipal office or prefecture which must be submitted in Greek either in person or through an authorized lawyer. For more Information on self-employment in Greece you can contact the following organizations:

- ESPA seeks to tackle the structural weaknesses in Greece. Businesses (especially small businesses), public bodies, associations, and individuals are eligible to the provisions of ESPA (e.g. financial grants, funding, consulting, vocational programs, etc.). All projects will be considered, provided that they meet the selection criteria decided on by the managing authority for the relevant program.
- OAED, as the main organization for Manpower Employment, offers a professional consulting program for people who want to develop skills in finding a business idea and translating it into a business plan that will be a guide for starting a sustainable business. This program concerns all citizens of the country who are registered in the register of the organization.
- EU grants are available to businesses and individuals in many European countries, through direct or indirect provision You should apply via the relevant regional or national authorities (known as managing authorities) in the member state where you are registered. These managing authorities in Greece are categorized according to the region they are responsible for and can be found in this [link](#).
- The Greek migrant organization offers a series of workshops and seminars on professional orientation, legal issues and empowerment skills (including collective representation and the use of communication skills), and will include the participation of institutions such as the General Workers' Association, the Greek Ombudsman and the Athens Bar Association. It also offers an Immigration Support Desk, which provides information, legal guidance, and psychological support.
- Elevate Greece is the official platform and leading resource for in-depth information on the Greek Startup Ecosystem, aspiring to help it grow and expand.
- The Ministry of Immigration and Asylum and the International Organization for Migration carry out vocational training and integration into the Greek labor market of recognized refugees.

Furthermore, you can get input from projects and programmes organized by local authorities, NGOs, universities, vocational centers as well as general consulting agencies.



ITALY

How to strengthen entrepreneurial skills ?

Below is a list of initiatives and projects that provide support and training for immigrant entrepreneurs:

- info on training courses for immigrant entrepreneurs is offered by the M.I.C.R.O. - Migrants Ideas Converted into Real Opportunities - funded by the Erasmus + program available online for free;
- the free webinars organized within the "FUTURAE - migrant enterprises program" funded by the National Fund for Migration Policies 2018 and available on the websites of various National Chambers of Commerce (e.g. Rome, Modena, Milan, etc.);
- the Online Migrants Entrepreneurship Course created as a result of Erasmus+ KA2 "Vet opportunities for migrants and refugees - VET4MIGRE" project.
- the free training course organized by EU funded project "The Entrepreneurial Capacity Building for Young Migrants (YMCB)": Education and training approach is based on a blend of 'classroom' and online modules, led by experienced trainers also supported by an innovative MOOC and sharing e-learning platform. Mentoring activities will strengthen the entrepreneurial support by regular, individual, one-to-one meetings with experienced mentors and thematic group sessions.

Surfing the net, you could find many paid courses to strengthen entrepreneurial skills; they are quite generic and most of them are in Italian. Many official courses/webinars are organized by the local Chamber of Commerce (through this website you can look for the closer Chamber of Commerce and navigate its website to find the courses/webinar available).



BUSINESS START UP STEP BY STEP

**A STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR
DEVELOPING AND OPENING YOUR
OWN BUSINESS**



BUSINESS START UP STEP BY STEP

This second part of the handbook is a step by step guide to help you open your own business and become an entrepreneur. In the following pages you will get Information about developing a business idea, a business plan, how to decide your legal structure, vendors, brand and teambuilding basics.

It is essential that you analyze what is driving you to launch a new business. A good "self-analysis" could start from the evaluation of the pros and cons of an autonomous activity.

For example:

PROS (advantages):

- Having the possibility of greater earnings;
- Having greater flexibility and autonomy with respect to dependent work;
- Take advantage of the experience gained from the socio-cultural context to which you belong;
- Being able to give employment to family and friends who could, one day, be the heirs of your business;
- Feeling more motivated and stimulated by an activity created from scratch with sacrifices and dedication.

CONS (disadvantages):

- Take on greater economic risks and responsibilities (towards customers, suppliers, employees and yourself);
- Having to sacrifice more free time as well as financial security compared to being an employee;
- A greater workload and no fixed agendas (at least at the beginning of the process);
- Be conscious that at the start of the business, earning could be less than those of an employee



For more Information have a look at the [`Start Your Business Manual`](#) from the International Labour Organization

HOW DO I DEVELOP MY BUSINESS IDEA?

A business Idea is a concept, which can be used for commercial purposes. It typically centers around a product or service that can be sold for money, according to a unique model. There are several methods for developing and testing a business idea.



Define your Products and Services

Every business delivers something to customers. That something can be a product or service. You must clearly and accurately define those products or services the business will rely on by answering:

- What product or service will you offer?
- What are the characteristics of your products or services?
- What are the benefits that your products or service will bring to your potential customers?



Define the Market for your Business Idea

You must define the market that you will serve with these products or services. The following questions will help you:

- On which market will you offer these products and services (city, region, country, continent, field etc.)?
- Who will be the customers of these products or services?
- What are the features of those customers who will consume your products or services (sex, age, income, ethnicity, etc.)?



Define your main Competitors

Be careful! Don't underestimate your competitors because your success doesn't rely only on your efforts, but on their performance, as well. So, it is necessary to precisely define your main competitors on the market:

- What are the five most significant market players in the industry in which you categorize your business idea?
- What, where, and how do these five major market players offer their products and services?
- What are the main features of their products or services?
- What are the benefits of their products or services?



Define Resources Required for your Business Idea

Now, it is time to define the necessary resources you will need if you want your idea to turn into a real business. You will need to define at least the following:

- How many human resources will you need? (e.g. employees, suppliers etc.)
- How much financial resources will you need?
- What material resources will you need? (e.g. facilities, equipment, etc.)
- What information resources will you need?
- What will be the sources of all these resources and where will you find them?

HOW DO I CREATE MY BUSINESS PLAN ?

In simple terms, a business plan is a road map that describes in detail how a business - especially a startup - defines its objectives and how it will accomplish its goals. It covers the marketing, financial, and operational standpoints of a business. It is especially useful for new businesses because it keeps them on target. Most importantly you will need to present your Business Plan to investors or to a lending institution, such as a bank or a micro finance institution, to obtain a loan.

There are two main types of business plan:

- The traditional business plan is lengthy (10-20 pages), very detail oriented, comprehensive, and it is more suitable when you request financing from traditional sources.
- The lean business plan is very short (usually 1 page). It is more suitable if you request financing from more alternative sources, such as crowdfunding. It has the format of a table which presents the main parts of a business that must be organized when it is set up. These parts are the blocks of the table where you can take brief notes for every business part.

In the following we will give you an overview of both formats.



THE TRADITIONAL BUSINESS PLAN



Executive summary: Briefly mention the main idea of your company

- Why will it be successful?
- What is your mission statement?
- What is your product/service?
- Basic information about: leadership team, employees, and location.
- Include financial information and high-level economic growth plans if you intend to ask for financing.



Company description: Detailed information about your company

- What problems does your business solve?
- Which consumers and/or businesses will your company serve?
- What is your competitive advantage?
- Are there experts on your team?
- Have you found the perfect location for your store?
- What are your strengths?



Market analysis: Make a competitive research

- Which is your target market?
- What are the current trends and themes in your market?
- Who are your competitors?
- What do successful competitors do? Can you do it better?



Organization and Management

- How will your company be structured?
- Who will run the business?
- Which is the legal structure of your business?
- Do you have an organizational chart?
- Show how each person's unique experience will contribute to the success of your venture.
- Have you gathered resumes and CVs of key members?



Marketing and Sales

- What are your unique needs?
- Do you have a marketing strategy?
- How will you attract and retain customers?
- How will sales take place?
- Describe your complete marketing and sales strategies.



Funding request: Outline your funding requirements

- How much funding will you need over the next five years?
- What will you use it for?
- Do you want debt or equity?
- What terms would you like applied?
- What period of time will your request cover?
- Do you need funds to buy equipment or materials, pay salaries, or cover specific bills?
- Include a description of your future strategic financial plans, like paying off debt or selling your business.



Financial projections: Provide financial projections to show that your business is stable and will be a financial success

- Include income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements for the last three to five years, if available.
- List any other collateral you have.
- Provide a prospective financial outlook for the next five years, including forecasted income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and capital expenditure budgets.
- For the first year, be even more specific and use quarterly — or even monthly — projections.
- What are your projections according to your funding requests?
- Use graphs and charts to tell the financial story of your business.

Appendix

In this section you can provide supporting documents or other materials that might be requested, such as credit histories, resumes, product pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, or patents, legal documents, and other contracts.

THE LEAN BUSINESS PLAN

Lean startup business plans are charts that only include parts of the business to describe its operations. One such lean and popular business plan is the Business Model Canvas.

The 9 blocks of the Business Model Canvas represent:



Key partners

Partnerships include other businesses or services you will collaborate with, such as suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors and similar strategic partners.

1



Key activities

The activities include what you do to gain a competitive advantage. For example, selling directly to consumers might be a unique characteristic of your company.

2

Key resources

Your most important resources could include staff, capital, or intellectual property, and anything else you need to make your business work and create value for your customer.

3



4

Value proposition

This is your detailed statement about the unique value your company brings to the market.



Customer relationships

How will customers interact with your business? Is it automated or personal? In person or online?



5



Channels

Channels are all the ways, tools, and methods that are used to reach your potential and existing customers. Usually there are various channels for communication and not only one.

6

7

Customer segments

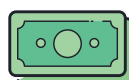
Define what kind of customers your business will serve and what your target market is.



8

Cost structure

When defining your financial strategy, you must list the most significant costs you will encounter.



Revenue streams

How will your company make money? Through direct sales, memberships fees, selling advertising space? If there are multiple revenue streams, list them all.

9



LEGAL BUSINESS STRUCTURE

The legal structure of your business is very important because it affects the taxes you pay, the money you can raise, the paperwork you need to file, and your personal liability. You must carefully choose your business structure, for this reason you should consult with business counselors, attorneys, and accountants before you register your business, get a tax ID number and file for the appropriate licenses and permits.

The table below presents the common business structures, as well as general traits of these business structures and compares them with each other. Remember that ownership rules, liability, taxes, and filing requirements for each business structure can vary by country or even state.

Business structure	Ownership	Liability	Taxes
Sole proprietorship	One person	Unlimited personal liability	Personal tax only
Partnerships	Two or more people	Unlimited personal liability unless structured as a limited partnership	Self-employment tax (except for limited partners) Personal tax
Limited liability company (LLC)	One or more people	Owners are not personally liable	Self-employment tax, Personal tax or corporate tax
Corporation - C corp	One or more people	Owners are not personally liable	Corporate tax
Corporation - S corp	One or more people but no more than 100, and all must be U.S. citizens	Owners are not personally liable	Personal tax
Corporation - B corp	One or more people	Owners are not personally liable	Corporate tax
Corporation - Nonprofit	One or more people	Owners are not personally liable	Tax-exempt, but corporate profits can't be distributed

THE BUSINESS BRAND

What is a brand?

Companies use brands to distinguish their deliverables from others. It is one of the most valuable assets of the business because it represents the organization and the public often associates the brand with the company. The company is often referred to by its brand, if it is successful, so it becomes a way of customers' identifying your business.

A brand can be:

- An identifying symbol
- A mark
- A logo
- A name
- A word
- A whole sentence
- A combination of the above

Developing a business brand

A successful brand helps your business attract new customers and retain existing ones. It should be fully developed before it is inserted in advertising or on marketing material. It might not seem as a priority when starting a business, but it is a very important element and it needs careful and professional consideration.

→ Seek professional advice !

Whether you develop branding by yourself or hire a professional branding consultant or designer, the brand must be based on the vision of your business. If you go for professional assistance, a good idea would be to ask and see their portfolio of work.



Extra tip!

If you have a small budget, use a design contest: through a design contest website, you can set your design brief and your budget and a network of designers can view it and submit designs. You can request changes to designs you like before you pick a winner. This can be cheaper than hiring a professional as many of the designers are students, but it can still produce a better result than if you did it yourself. Don't forget to seek legal advice for issues such as intellectual property, patents and trademarks.

Also consider...

...how to select and register a business name.

...how to create a website for your business.

...how to incorporate your brand in your marketing plan.

...how to conduct customer research to make sure your brand is suitable for your target audience.



VENDORS

A vendor, also called as a supplier, is an individual or a business that provides something to your business. A vendor is a part of the supply chain that delivers goods and services to companies or consumers. These are the common types of Vendors:

- **B2C (Business to Consumer)**

B2C vendors sell directly to consumers; they mostly sell completed products and/or even product components. The retail store Gap that sells clothing is an example of B2C vendor. A vendor can also sell online while others specialize in providing consumer services.

- **B2G (Business to Government)**

The B2G type of vendor sells to the government through government contracts. For example, Raytheon and Lockheed Martin sell defense products and components to the Army. A government consultant can be a B2G vendor, as well.

- **B2B (Business to Business)**

B2B vendors' main customers are other vendors and businesses. An example of a B2B vendor is Panasonic, which sells batteries to Tesla, or microchip manufacturers, such as Intel or Advanced Micro Devices.

How can you evaluate vendors?

There are 5 factors to take into consideration:

- ✓ Price
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Stability
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Available stock

TEAMBUILDING

After arranging all the legal and financial issues of a business, every entrepreneur must take decisions on operational issues. They must decide whether they are going to work alone or in a team. If the answer to the latter question is yes, then the question that comes next is:

How can I build a successful team?

It is a common phenomenon for entrepreneurs to ask for professional guidance regarding, management training, business support or even teambuilding. Many targeted skills and specialized knowledge are essential to build and lead a team that works well together, so it is beneficial to ask for professional help in how to get there.

However, whether you decide to build a team on your own or with a professional 5 items must be taken into consideration to make a team function effectively:

- Mission
- Goals
- Roles and responsibilities
- Groundrules
- Decision-making





GERMANY

LAUNCH OF THE BUSINESS

First of all, you will have to obtain and/or check your residence permit in order to find out if you are eligible to start your own business and if yes, under what conditions. If you have one of the residence permits (§§ 22–26 AufenthG) you do not require permission from the Foreigners' Office.

If you have a different residence permit, you will most likely require permission from the Foreigners' Office to start your own business.

For more detailed information about your residence permit, use this [guidebook](#).

For more information:

- [Starting your own business](#)
- [Start a business in Germany](#)
- [Do you want to create a business plan?](#)
- [Founding a Company in Germany! - Information and advice for international skilled workers, migrants and refugees](#)

FINANCING

Financial sources for your business:

- equity capital (your own money and investments),
- external capital (bank and subsidized loans).

You should contribute a certain amount of your own capital. The share of equity capital in the total capital should not be less than 20% of the total capital, but rather higher.

- [State funding programs for development loans](#): Development loans from the federal government and the federal states usually offer more favorable conditions than loans from credit institutions.
- **Bank loans**: Bank loans are available from your house bank, so you should consult them physically or online. If you already have a company bank, you can negotiate a loan with your advisor and ask about other funding opportunities.
- **Crowdfunding**: Founders present their start-up project on an online platform and internet users provide more or less small amounts of money for its realisation. Within a few years, this procedure has found more and more followers.

More information about funding:

- [Existenzgründer Guide](#)
- [KfW Bank](#)
- [EXIST Star Up Grant](#)
- [European Social Fund](#)
- [University of Erlangen Start Up Guide](#)
- [Business Angels](#)
- [High-Tech Start Up Fund](#)



GERMANY

APPLYING FOR LICENSES AND PERMITS

If you have the necessary qualifications and materials and if your residence status allows you to be self-employed, you can register your trade to the Trade Office in your area of interest. You can find contact information for the Trade Office in your local Registry Office or [online](#).

The Trade Office will forward your work approval to the tax authorities, the Commercial Registry, the employers' liability insurance association and the responsible Chamber of Industry and Commerce or Chamber of Crafts. These institutions will then contact you. If you plan to hire employees, the statutory health insurance system, trade supervisory board and public employment office will also be informed.

Most importantly: Seek advice!

TAXES

After you have registered with the trade and tax office, you will also receive a payment plan from the tax office, laying out the taxes you must pay, on the basis of your turnover predictions. Depending on your estimated income, you may be required to pay income tax and VAT monthly, quarterly or yearly via an [annual tax return](#).

Types of business tax in Germany

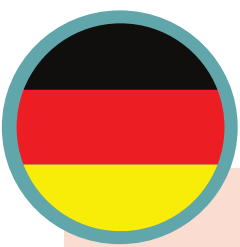
If you are self-employed in Germany, you will pay some or all of the following kinds of tax, depending on the [type of business](#) you run and your annual turnover:

- Trade tax (*Gewerbesteuer*)
- Corporation tax (*Körperschaftsteuer*)
- Income tax (*Einkommensteuer*)
- VAT (*Umsatzsteuer*)
- Payroll tax (*Lohnsteuer* - if you have employees)
- Church tax (*Kirchensteuer*)

Business-related deductions

Self-employed workers in Germany are able to reduce their overall taxable income by deducting a large number of work-related expenses. This includes payments for:

- Traveling or commuting
- Training
- Equipment
- Leasing a [workspace](#) (or [rent](#) if you have a home office)
- [Car](#)
- [Mobile phone](#) or [internet](#)



GERMANY

INSURANCES

As freelancers are not subject to compulsory social security contributions, they will need to take care of their own insurance cover.

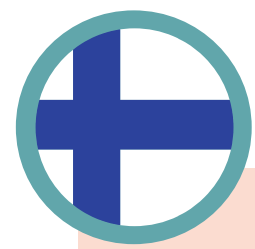
Health insurance for freelancers

Having health insurance is mandatory in Germany. Being covered by statutory health insurance automatically qualifies you for long-term care insurance and sickness benefit. The scheme also provides cover for your dependent family members. Freelance workers can voluntarily contribute to a statutory health insurance scheme, although bear in mind that you will usually need to cover the whole contribution (14.6% of your income) yourself.

For many freelance workers, private health insurance may work out cheaper, as the premiums are based on relative risk factors (i.e. your age and general health), rather than on a proportion of their salary. If you opt for a private scheme, you need to make sure you are also covered for long-term care and in the event of your inability to work due to sickness.

You might also decide to take on:

- Unemployment insurance
- Occupational accident insurance



FINLAND

LAUNCH OF THE BUSINESS

- Make a business plan

Help in making a business plan:

- [Information on entrepreneurship and running a business](#)
- [MYENTERPRISE FINLAND](#)
- [Important prerequisites for establishing a business in Finland](#)

- Pick a name for your company

See if there are any obstacles to registering the name: [NAME CHECKING SERVICE FOR COMPANIES](#)

- Submit a start-up notification

Submit your company's start-up notification in the [Business Information System](#). Based on the notification, your company's information will be submitted to the trade register of the Finnish Patent and Registration Office and the registers of the Tax Administration.

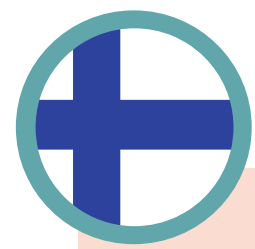
FINANCES

With the help of the [Financial calculations](#) guide, you can calculate the profitability of your business.

- [Apply for the start-up grant](#): Submit a start-up grant application to the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE Office) before establishing your company.
- [Apply for funding](#): You can finance your business activities by seeking external funding or [alternatives](#).

APPLYING FOR LICENSES AND PERMITS

[Apply for necessary permits](#): Check the operating instructions for each permit and verify from the authority responsible that the following permits are sufficient for your operations.



FINLAND

TAXES

Register your company in the registers maintained by the Tax Administration as you submit the start-up notification of your company. Include an estimate of your company's profits during its first year. After this, the Tax Administration will give you instructions on how to report and pay taxes.

- VAT register: Calculate, declare and pay your VAT.
- Prepayment register: You must make sure that you pay tax prepayments. Apply for a new or previously determined tax prepayment.
- Employer register:

Register your company in the employer register if your company employs at least two employees on a regular basis or at least six employees on a temporary basis during the calendar year.

Report your employer's contributions to the Tax Administration.
Information about business taxation [HERE](#).

INSURANCES

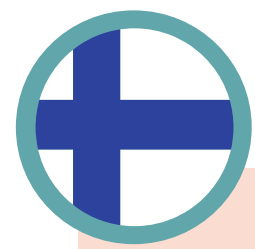
For Self-employed:

YEL insurance is mandatory for most entrepreneurs. You should take out pension insurance according to the **Self-Employed Persons' Pensions Act** immediately when you start a business. You must take out YEL insurance within six months from the start of the business at the latest. YEL insurance is mandatory if entrepreneurship lasts more than four months. If you simply own a company, you cannot take out pension insurance for self-employed workers. You have to work in your company to have the right to insure yourself.

You must take out YEL insurance if:

- You are a resident in Finland.
- You work in your company.
- You have been an entrepreneur continuously for at least four months.
- You do not have any other pension cover for the same activities.
- Your annual income is at least EUR 8,063.57 (2021).
- You are aged 18–68 years. The upper age limit for insurance increases gradually.

You can calculate your YEL contribution [here](#).



FINLAND

Self-employed persons' pension insurance (YEL) and the employer's pension insurance (TyEL) both provide cover for retirement. Which one to choose depends on whether the work was done as an assignment or in an employment relationship. The general rule is that if you are an entrepreneur and fulfill the criteria set out above, you choose YEL.

Useful links:

- [Pensions for the Self-employed](#)
- [Unemployment benefits for entrepreneurs](#)
- [SYT Unemployment Fund](#)
- [Industry-specific insurances](#)

Additional voluntary insurances:

You can take out additional insurances through the insurance company of your choice whenever necessary. You may wish to obtain your own critical illness insurance from a private insurance company, for added peace of mind.

Mandatory insurance for employers:

The employer is obligated to ensure the employees in accordance with the Employees Pensions Act and the Workers' Compensation Act. Mandatory insurance for employers includes:

- pension insurance
- occupational accident and disease insurance
- employees' group life insurance
- unemployment insurance
- contributions and health insurance payments.

In certain situations, the Finnish Centre for Pensions can also [exempt a foreign employer from the obligation to take out pension insurance](#).



GREECE

LAUNCH OF THE BUSINESS

Before the launch of the business and during the planning of the launch, there are plenty of sources from private and public institutions where you can read (articles, blogs, sites) about the necessary procedures for the launching of a business:

- <https://www.pkp.com.gr/enarksi-atomikis-epixirisis/>
- <https://www.gov.gr/upourgeia/upourgeio-anaptuxes-kai-ependuseon/kentrike-enose-epimeleterion-ellados/sustase-epikheireses>
- <https://aade.gr/menoy/hristikoi-odigoi/enarxi-epiheirimatikis-drastiriotitas>
- <https://www.startyouup.gr/el/a/90-idrysh-systash-etaireias-epilogh-metaksy-oe-ee-ike-ae-forologja-etaireiwn>

APPLYING FOR LICENSES AND PERMITS

The basic legal framework governing the business activities of third country nationals in Greece:

- A) Law 3386/2005 on entry, residence, etc. mainly concerns the exercise of self-employed economic activity,
- B) The Investment Law 3894/2010, for investments in Greece,
- C) Legal provisions for the establishment of a company.

A basic condition for third-country nationals to start a commercial activity in Greece is the issuance of a relevant license (Article 9 of Law 3386/2005).

For any employment relationship, the applicant must apply for a tax registration number (AFM) at the local tax collection service and a social security number (AMKA) at the Social Security Institute. You can get an AMKA number from the nearest IKA (Social Security Institute) office or the Citizens' Service Office (KEP).

Applications must be submitted in Greek either in person or through an authorized lawyer.

The rest of licenses and permits that are required for the starting of a business depend on the type of the business, the kind and size of the business activity, and the location where the business will be set up. There are several different requirements for all these factors and their combinations, for this reason the applicant should address public bodies that are responsible for such procedures in person, like a City Hall services department, the local tax authority, regional authorities, OAEE (vocational chamber), OAED, etc., and local NGOs and/or private vocational centres that run projects and programmes for refugees and asylum seekers.



GREECE

FINANCES

For a better understanding of the basic characteristics of each form of business but also their advantages and disadvantages, the following table can be very useful:

	Criteria	I.K.E.	Ltd.	SA	O.E.	EU.	M.K.O	Individual
	Type of Business	Capital	Capital	Capital	Personal	Personal	Social Purpose	Personal
A	Establishment procedures per Company Type							
1	Founding Fund	1 €	€ 2,400	€ 24,000	0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €
2	Contributions in kind	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
3	Extracapital Contributions	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
4	Minimum number of Partners	> 2	> 2	> 2	> 2	> 2	> 2	1
5	Starting point - Recommendation	KEP or GEMI	Certified Notary	Certified Notary	KEP or GEMI	KEP or GEMI	Ministry of Labour	KEP or GEMI
6	Indicative Establishment Cost - in GEMI	80 €	80 €	80 €	60 €	60 €	€ 200	60 €
7	Other Financial Charges, eg Notary	44.02 plus 6 € per sheet plus VAT 24%	44.02 plus 6 € per sheet plus VAT 24%	500 € plus 6 € per sheet plus VAT 24%	0 €	0 €	0 €	0 €
8	Other Financial Charges, Lawyer if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required by agreement if required	Not required
9	Contributions in favor of the Legal Fund	Not required	Not required	0.5% or 1% on the Capital of the Company	0.5% or 1% on the Capital of the Company	0.5% or 1% on the Capital of the Company	Not required	Not required
10	Capital accumulation tax	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
11	Finally in favor of the Competition Commission on Capital	0%	0%	1 % ^o	0%	0%	0%	0%

Some useful sites to get information and help regarding funding from EE and Greece are the following:

- https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/finance-funding/getting-funding/eu-funding-programmes/index_en.htm
- https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/finance-funding/getting-funding/access-finance/search/en/financial-intermediaries?shs_term_node_tid_depth=723
- https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/running-business/start-ups/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs/index_en.htm
- <http://www.opengov.gr/immigration/?p=759>
- <https://www.espa.gr/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Public and private bodies and institutions, such as ESPA and OAED, national, regional and local authorities, NGOs, employment services, social partners, higher education institutions and research institutes, impact assessment experts, national statistical institutes, small and medium-sized enterprises can support refugees and asylum seekers to apply for a funding.



GREECE

TAXES

Since 01/01/2020 the tax rate has been reduced to 9% (from 22%) for the earnings of freelance entrepreneurs and the self-employed.

Every year the tax is provided in 3 deposits, based on your taxation in the previous year or your taxation estimations if you have a new business. There are different types of income in Greece which are taxed as follows:

- https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/taxes/income-taxes-abroad/greece/index_el.htm#

Also, here you can find information about when you are eligible for benefits in Greece, what you are entitled to and how to go about claiming it:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1112&langId=en>

Other useful links to check the taxation system and requirements in Greece:

- <https://www.gov.gr/ipiresies/epikheirematike-drasterioteta/phorologia-epikheireseon>
- <https://www.taxheaven.gr/news/52232/pws-oa-forologhooy-n-oi-misowtoi-oi-eleyoeroi-epaggelmaties-kai-oi-epixeirhseis-gia-to-2020-klimakes-kai-syntelestes-forologias?output=printer>
- <https://www.startyouup.gr/el/a/106-forologia-epixeirhsewn>
- <https://www.minfin.gr/web/31511/phorologika-themata>

INSURANCES

You are free to choose one of the following insurance categories for Freelancers and Self-Employed. The categories are based on the income you have. The insurance categories include contributions from the Pension and Health Sectors. For more and detailed information on insurance for self-employment, you can check the official site of EFKA, the national institution of social insurance in Greece. Other useful institutions for social insurance per region in Greece can be found here:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=el>



ITALY

LAUNCH OF THE BUSINESS

If you need support during the start-up phase and for the management, depending on the needs, you can rely on different professionals. Also, having a business partner, perhaps someone with more expertise could also be an added value.

Among the professionals you could consult are:

- an accountant, an expert who is responsible for supporting the entrepreneur on tax and accounting obligations, corporate law, bankruptcy and labor law,
- a financial consultant, a professional who generally deals with finance and related tax and legal aspects,
- a labor consultant, an expert who is competent in everything related to labor law issues, therefore the administration of the personnel hired by the company,
- the Chambers of Commerce and the trade associations offer some free services for associated companies through administrative and accounting support.

Below the institutions, organizations, and public bodies where you can find useful information related to labor market regulation:

- [The Ministry of Economy and Finance](#)
- [The Ministry of Economic Development](#)
- [The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies](#)
- The Revenue Agency
- Municipalities, Provinces and Regions
- [The Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Crafts](#)
- Trade associations:
 - Confindustria, The General Confederation of Italian,
 - [Confcommercio](#), the Italian General Confederation of Enterprises, Professional Activities and Self-employment,
 - [Confesercenti](#), the Confederation of traders in commerce and tourism,
 - [Confartigianato](#), the General confederation of Italian crafts.

Third Sector Associations such as social cooperatives, social promotion associations, voluntary associations, non-governmental associations (NGOs), ONLUS, etc. locally active, often offering services related to social integration or support for the entrepreneurship of migrants projects funded by international or national programs.

In their national websites you can find the closest territorial trade association where you can ask for more information.



ITALY

FINANCES

Cost items when starting a business:

- Establishment: expenses related to the drafting of the notarial deed (necessary for companies and family businesses), payment of the registration tax and government concession (for joint stock companies) and registration in the Register of Companies or in the Register of Artisan Enterprises (related to secretarial fees and stamps);
- INAIL: insurance obligation for all employers who hire employees and para-subordinate workers in activities defined as risky by law;
- INPS: welfare and social security contributions proportionate to the income received annually;
- Annual tax to the Chamber of Commerce: tax due to the Chamber of Commerce "by each company registered or noted in the Business Register, and by each person registered in the Economic and Administrative News Directory, REA". The amount requested varies according to the legal form and the number of reported offices.
- Local taxes: taxes paid to the Municipality.
- Licenses and certificates: depending on the sector of the business, a certificate or license for operation may be required.
- Accounting: expenditure relating to the administrative and fiscal function generally entrusted to an expert, such as the accountant responsible for caring of all accounting and tax obligations;
- Authorizations: for some activities it would be necessary to get authorizations in order to plan for costs and possible inspections.

For more information:

- https://www.retesai.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LINEE_GUIDA_PER_I_TUTOR_DIMPRESA.pdf
- <https://www.unhcr.org/it/>
- <https://rivista.microcredito.gov.it/world-news/archivio-world-news/492-integrazione-degli-immigrati-attraverso-il-microcredito.html>
- https://www.retesai.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/LINEE_GUIDA_PER_I_TUTOR_DIMPRESA.pdf



ITALY

The financial sources for refugee and migrant entrepreneurs could be categorized in two groups:

- external capital, represented by the system of bank loans, insurances and microcredit resources,
- equity capital, represented by peer to peer forms of loans, crowdfunding, co-finances, etc.

External capital examples

1. The A.M.I.C.I. project (Access to Microcredit for Immigrant Citizens) whose goal is to facilitate the access of foreigners to the labor market by setting up micro-enterprises and forms of self-employment through the micro-credit instrument.

2. The "RE-LAB: start-up your business" project aiming at seizing the opportunity to offer business orientation services proposed by an innovative figure such as the "business tutor", carried out by migrants and for migrants. RE-LAB is an initiative which aims to promote and support self-entrepreneurship of subjects with international protection through training and technical and financial assistance, aimed at starting new businesses.

3. The Human Safety Net Program for Refugee Start-ups works side-by-side with refugees to realize their business ideas through training, coaching, and access to workspaces and funding. The goal is to support refugees in developing concrete business plans, register their companies and start serving their first customers. Participants in the program will have the opportunity to learn about the business environment of the host countries and to strengthen their networks by coming into contact with new colleagues, mentors and business partners. And if entrepreneurship doesn't prove to be the right path for them, the program offers participants professional training and operational coaching for the jobs most in demand in their communities.

Equity Capital examples

1. Crowdfunding - "Produzioni dal Basso" is the first crowdfunding platform born in Italy. This is an entrepreneurship orientation project for people with International Protection, which provides skills and tools useful for starting economic activities.

2. Peer-to-peer loans and self-financing groups and cooperatives

3. Diaspora investments

4. Co-financing



ITALY

APPLYING FOR LICENSES AND PERMITS

This topic is very complicated in Italy and very specific from case to case. Due to this differentiation of requirements, the interested parts should consult professionals and/or relevant agencies and services to compile the necessary information and proceed with any required actions.

First of all, a non-EU citizen who resides in Italy must have a valid residence permit regularly issued by the Police Force for self-employment. If you don't have a residence permit (e.g. if you reside abroad), you must apply for it to the Police Force. Also, the INPS - Social Security Service can offer assistance on many topics regarding the residence permit.

Legal requirements:

- possess the professional and ethical requisites required by law for Italian citizens,
- get the approval from the Municipality concerning the location for the business,
- check whether there is a need for authorizations for the exercise of the activity and/or health authorizations.

After having obtained an appropriate residence permit and verified the requirements relating to the opening of the business, the future entrepreneur is requested to follow these bureaucratic procedures:

- Creating the VAT NUMBER,
- Registration in the Business Register at the Chamber of Commerce within 30 days from the launch of the activity,
- Submit the complaint to the R.E.A. (Repertory for Economic-Administrative news),
- Registration with INPS (National Institute of Social Security) for social security contributions, after being registered in the Business Register,
- Registration with INAIL (National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work),
- Communication to the MUNICIPALITY - Tax Office - of the start of business for the purpose of applying the tax on waste collection.

To complete the process described, since 2010 the only valid tool is the Single Business Communication (Comunicazione Unica).



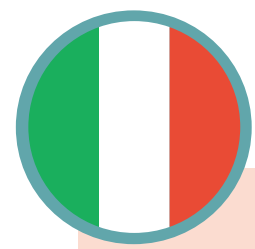
ITALY

TAXES

The main taxes applied to businesses are:

- IRPEF (Personal Income Tax): direct tax that is applied to the entrepreneur's annual income.
- Additional IRPEF: tax applied by the Regions to the overall tax base of IRPEF.
- VAT (Value Added Tax): a tax that subjects the value of trade in goods and services to indirect taxation, thus affecting entrepreneurs who in turn have the right to strike against the final buyer.
- IRAP (Regional Tax on Productive Activities): it is a direct tax that is charged in a proportional manner and which is applied to the production activities carried out in each region. It affects only those who carry out business activities like entrepreneurs, artisans and professionals.
- IRES (Corporate Income Tax): concerns all those to whom IRPEF does not apply, therefore joint-stock companies, cooperatives, mutual insurance companies, trusts, public and private entities residing in Italy, as well as companies not residing in the national territory.
- IMU (Single Municipal Tax) and TASI (Tax for indivisible services): together with the TARI they are the components of the main municipal tax. IMU is the municipal tax on the possession of real estate; TASI was the tax for indivisible services, i.e. those services provided by the Municipality and used in general by all citizens. With the 2020 Budget Law it was in fact merged with the IMU.

Concerning national fees for business activities, the main tax is the TARI (Waste collection fee): the tax intended to finance the costs relating to the waste collection and disposal service.



ITALY

INSURANCES

Insurance policies cover two different types of damage, internal and external ones. External damages are linked to socio-political events (such as riots, for example) or natural disasters. Internal damage relates to company assets (theft, breakdowns, etc.) and can also cover financial risks.

The most common insurances concern civil liability towards third parties (Responsabilità Civile verso Terzi), coverage for damage to the building and / or contents and legal protection.

You could request an appointment to get a quotation in relation to some specific needs by referring at some of the main insurance companies:

- [Allianz](#)
- [UnipolSai Assicurazioni](#)
- [Axa](#)
- [Tua Assicurazioni](#)
- [Sara](#)