

Launch Your Dreams in Europe: Portugal's Start-Up Visa

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By **Catarina Sardinha**, 15th April 2024

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Why Portugal?

Portugal has rapidly become a magnet for entrepreneurs and is lauded for its:

- **Supportive Ecosystem:** A network of business incubators, co-working spaces, and government agencies provide guidance, resources, and funding opportunities to help your start-up take root.

- **Favourable Tax Environment:** Portugal offers competitive tax rates for both companies and individuals:
 - **Individuals:** under certain conditions, individuals may benefit for the favourable tax regime called the NHR – see [here](#) for more details. Other advantages may still exist for those not eligible for NHR.

- **Corporate:** Taxes from 12.5% apply to start-ups in Portugal mainland – however, making use of the Madeira International Business Centre is an alternative option which provides an attractive tax rate of 5%. Read [here](#) for more details.
 - Further, government support programs are available in Portugal to support start-ups.

- **High Quality of Life:** Portugal boasts a stunning coastline, rich culture, and a welcoming population, making it an ideal place to live, work, and raise a family.
- **Doorway into Europe:** a gateway into the world’s largest trading bloc with access to a favourable business with clients, suppliers, grants and beneficial tax regimes

Furthermore, Portugal is rapidly emerging as a **significant player in the global start-up landscape**, with several companies achieving unicorn status and attracting significant investment. This thriving ecosystem presents a compelling opportunity for ambitious entrepreneurs seeking to establish their businesses in Europe.

The Start-Up Visa: Your Gateway to Success

The Start-Up Visa streamlines the visa application process for foreign entrepreneurs, allowing you to:

- **Gain residency in Portugal:** This visa allows you to live and work in Portugal, granting access to the European Union market. After living in Portugal for 5 years, you and your family can apply for citizenship or permanent residency.
- **Bring your family:** You can extend your visa to include your spouse and dependent children.

- **Focus on your business:** With residency secured, you can devote your energy to building your dream company.

Eligibility and Requirements

To qualify for the Start-Up Visa, your business must meet the following criteria:

- **Innovation:** Your business idea must be deemed innovative by IAPMEI, the Portuguese public agency responsible for innovation in the economy and who evaluates applications. This typically involves presenting a unique product or service, deemed innovative, with high growth potential.

Eligible criteria includes:

- Opening or relocating a company in Portugal;
 - Focus on technology and knowledge;
 - Have the potential to attain, after five years after the incubation period, a turnover over €325,000 per year, and/or assets value over €325,000 per year.
- **Job creation:** Your business plan should demonstrate the potential to create qualified jobs in Portugal.

Portugal has many incubators to mentor and support new businesses. Explore a certified incubator and ask for a quotation of services. A signed contract with an incubator will be required when submitting for this type of visa option. A complete list of eligible incubators for the purposes of the start-up visa may be found here ([IAPMEI - Página Inicial](#)).

Minimum Stay Requirements:

- You must be present in Portugal, within a 24 months period, for 18 months in a row or 16 intermittent months to maintain your residency status.

Minimum Payments:

- There is no minimum investment required for the Start-Up Visa, unlike other residency routes in Portugal. However, you must demonstrate sufficient funds to support yourself and your dependents for the first year (as referred above).

Evaluation of the Visa

IAPMEI reviews and approves applications for the start-up visa. The evaluation of the visa is 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.

The processing time is at least 6 months to a year.

Taking the Next Step

At Dixcart Portugal, we are passionate about helping aspiring entrepreneurs like you navigate the complexities of international business ventures. We offer comprehensive guidance and to ensure a smooth and efficient journey.

Contact us today to schedule a consultation and learn how we can help you turn your vision into reality in Portugal (advice.portugal@dixcart.com). Together, let's launch your success story in Europe!

Additional Notes:

It is important to remember that this information is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute advice. It is highly recommended to consult with a qualified professional on your specific situation.