



## CYPRUS STARTUP VISA

### Introduction

As from February 2017 Cyprus adopted the Startup Visa Scheme for third Country Nationals. The scheme forms part of the Policy Statement on Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

It enables skilful entrepreneurs who are not EU or EEA nationals to reside and work in Cyprus contributing to the creation of jobs and subsequently, to the economic development of the country.

The Scheme applies both to individual entrepreneurs as well as teams of entrepreneurs and facilitates the establishment, operation and development of startups.

### Eligible Enterprises

Whilst there is no restriction with regards to the type of activity to be undertaken by the startup, there is a requirement that the enterprise is "innovative" in that its R&D costs represent at least 10% of its operating costs. For already operating entities, this is examined on the basis of the financial results of one of the last three years of operation whereas regarding entities with no financial history, innovation is examined on the strength of the business plan.

### Who is eligible to apply?

#### A. Individual Startup Visa Scheme

- Non-EU/EEA founder who has access to €50 000 (including venture capital funding, crowd funding or other sources of funding);
- Has very good Knowledge of Greek and/or English;
- Holds an undergraduate degree or an equivalent professional qualification;
- Meets the Requirements of the Enterprise.

#### B. Team Startup Visa Scheme

- Team Applicants:
  - o Consisting up to five (5) non-EU/EEA founders; or
  - o At least one founder and up to five individuals (senior managers who have access to stock options)
- possessing 50% plus 1 in the share capital of the company;
- Where the founder has access to €25 000 (or €50 000 when more than 1 founders);
- Whose at least 1 of their members has an undergraduate degree or an equivalent professional qualification;
- Who have very good knowledge of Greek and/or English language.



### Benefits of physical persons of qualified enterprises

- Right to economic activity and residence for one + one year;
- Founders are entitled to paid employment in qualifying enterprise;
- Senior Executives paid employment in qualifying enterprises;
- Indefinite residence permit If the enterprise succeeds;
- Entitlement to family reunification if the enterprise is successful;
- Ability to hire foreign personnel without obtaining the consent of the Department of Labour for successful enterprises (up 150 visas).

### Success Assessment

The success/ failure of the enterprise is assessed at the end of the second year of operations of the startup. One of the three below assessments shall be notified:

- A. The company is scaling up: the startup has achieved sufficient development and shall receive a Notification of Final Approval allowing all personnel at the time of Final Approval the rights of permanent residence and employment in Cyprus as well as family reunification;
- B. The company has not presented sufficient scale up but has positive outlook: A Notification Intermediate Approval will be issued and re-examination shall take place after 13 months where a final decision will be taken;
- C. The company has failed: all issued visas will be revoked unless alternative employment is sought.

### Our services

Our team consists of well-trained professionals with the primary goal of making all the benefits of the above scheme accessible to our clients. We can assist you with the following:

- Preparation and submission of a well-structured business plan.
- Drafting of various employment contracts and providing general legal advice to various employment, corporate and commercial matters, including to stock option schemes.
- Drafting of shareholders' (founders') agreements.
- Advice in relation to the incorporation of the company, if the company is not an existing company.
- Assistance with the procedure of the application for Visa, preparation of all the required and supportive documentation, submission of the application and completeness of the process.
- Assistance with the procedure of the application for work and residence permit preparation of all the required and supportive documentation, submission of the application and completeness of the process.
- Assistance with financing/ investment agreements (crowdfunding, venture capital etc.)
- Practical assistance with regards to finding premises, lodgings etc.
- Liaising with the Cyprus Authorities to ensure that the application is properly progressing and to avoid any undue delays.