

# STARTUP ESTONIA

## Estonian Startup Visa programme overview

Firenze, 12.12.2017

Startup Estonia



# Estonian startup scene in a nutshell

- △ 430+ startups
- △ 3500+ employees,  $\frac{3}{4}$  in Estonia
- △ €640M investments raised in the last 10 years, 17 exits
- △ 70+ startup support organisations
- △ Top startup events include Latitude59, Refresh and sTARTUp Day



# Focuses for Startup Estonia

1. Strong  
Ecosystem

2. Smart  
People

3. Smart  
Money

4. Friendlier  
Regulations



# Startup Visa program January 2017-...



# Challenge: Limited talent pool

\*Currently **3000-8000** vacancies in ICT sector and growing; All in all **-50k** people on the job market by 2024 than today, by 2040 – **160k** people.

\*Startups need access to top-notch talent, irrelevant of where they are in the world.

\*Estonian ecosystem needs 1000+ startups to reach next dev phase (according to Startup Genome).



The Estonian Startup Visa is meant for non-EU startup founders who wish to come and be a part of one of the smallest but liveliest startup communities in Europe as a founder. Under the Startup Visa program, a startup is defined as a business with the goal to develop and launch an innovative and repeatable business model with great global growth potential, which also contributes significantly to the development of the business environment in Estonia.

As an [Estonian startup](#), enriching and growing your company by employing foreign talent is made easier than ever through the Startup Visa program.

I AM A FOREIGN FOUNDER

Come and start your venture in Estonia!

I AM AN ESTONIAN STARTUP

Looking for awesome foreign talent?

# Foreign founder: Visa for startup entrepreneurship

- Long-term visa (national D-visa) for up to a 1-year-stay; can be extended for up to 6 months;
- Issued to launch or develop a startup in Estonia;
- Required to have minimum of 130 EUR per every month stayed in Estonia;
- Can bring the spouse and children along.

## For other companies than startups:

- For C-visa requirement of 94 EUR per each day spent in Estonia (does not apply for startups)
- no entrepreneurship visa option, only possible to apply for a temporary residence permit



# Foreign founder: Temporary residence permit for entrepreneurship

- For up to a 5-year-stay; extendable by another 10 years;
  - Business entity must be registered in Estonian business registry;
  - Required to have minimum of 130 EUR per every month stayed in Estonia;
  - Can bring the spouse and children along;
  - Exemption from the immigration quota.
- For other companies than startups:
- At least 65 000 EUR invested into Estonian business entity, 16 000 EUR in case of a sole proprietor
  - Immigration quota applies



# For whom?

- Visa for startup entrepreneurship for founders who participate in a qualified Estonian business acceleration program:
  - Startup Wise Guys accelerator program
  - BuildIT Hardware accelerator program
- Visa or TRP for startup entrepreneurship for founders who's startup gets a positive evaluation from the Startup Committee



# Startup Committee evaluates from the business perspective

## Startup Committee Application

Create a startup profile. Filling this takes about 20 minutes.

Continue and create new profile

Continue with existing profile



## Second step: Migration office runs the background checks

- Fill out the [application form for visa](#), print it and sign it (make sure to tick “Startup entrepreneurship” as the Purpose of Stay);
- Take the application **personally** to one of [Estonian Foreign Representations](#) dealing with long-term visas (see the link) or at a [Service Point](#) for the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board, if you are already legally staying in Estonia;
- More info on the detailed steps for applying can be found from [here](#).



# Estonian startups wanting to employ from outside EU

- Visa for short-term employment for up to a 1,5-year-stay; TRP for up to 5 years (extendable by 10 years)
- Requirement to pay at least the Estonian minimum gross salary to the foreigner, **not the Estonian average (as under general terms)**
- Can bring the spouse and children along
- TRP exemption from immigration quota

## For other companies than startups:

- Prior consent from Estonian Unemployment Office (stating that employee with same skills can't be acquired nationally)
- Immigration quota applies
- Requirement to pay at least monthly Estonian average salary

# For whom?

- Foreign employees that commence employment in Estonian startups, that get a positive evaluation from the STARTUP COMMITTEE
- Foreign employees that commence employment in Estonian startups, that are listed as startups by the degree of Ministry of Interior:  
<http://startupestonia.ee/visa/estonian-startups>



# First 9 months in numbers:

## STARTUP COMMITTEE:

250 startups applied from 45 countries

- Positive: 113
- Negative: 133
- Under review: 4

Visa or TRP granted

100+ startup employees

40+ startup founders

Most interest:

Ukraine, India, Russia, Turkey

Most successful:

Ukraine, Belarus, Turkey

your ticket to the most  
exciting and digitally advanced  
startup community in the World

STARTUP  
ESTONIA  
ESTONIAN  
STARTUP  
VISA

To continue your career in Estonia:

- Find a position of your interest with an Estonian startup (for example, at [startups.ee](http://startups.ee), [jobbatical.com](http://jobbatical.com) or [work.ee](http://work.ee)).
- Apply for either a startup visa or a permit for an Estonian Embassy (city of your choosing or at a Service Point for the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board).
- In case of a successful application, get ready to move to Estonia!



## New challenges arise

- Will the growing flow of applications collapse the whole process?!
- Not enough resources to provide soft-landing

## Learnings

- Plan customer journey up-front
- Improve process: build-measure-learn



# STARTUP ESTONIA



Rivo Riistop  
rivo@startupestonia.ee  
+372 5250 902

[startupestonia.ee](http://startupestonia.ee)

[#startupestonia](https://twitter.com/startupestonia)

