

Visa Application Process

Note to readers

GTAI's Investment Guide to Germany is intended to provide general information for foreign companies wishing to expand to Germany. GTAI is unfortunately not able to answer visa requirement queries from private individuals or support individual visa applications.

Further information can be found at the websites of the [German Federal Foreign Office](#) ▶ and [German Missions Abroad](#). ▶

What prerequisites need to be met for a visa?

When applying for a visa, foreign nationals are obligated to prove that they have:

- a passport valid for another three months after leaving Germany
- documents verifying the intended purpose of the stay in Germany
- a health insurance policy valid for all Schengen states providing medical coverage equivalent to the value of at least EUR 30,000 (including return transportation)
- sufficient financial means to cover all costs of the trip to and stay in Germany

Where to apply for a visa?

For most foreign nationals, visas have to be obtained prior to entering Germany in their respective home country. The German embassies or German consulates are responsible for receiving applications and issuing the visa. They provide visa application forms in various languages free of charge.

It is also possible to download visa application forms in different languages for free from the website of the German Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*).

- [Visa Application Forms provided by the Federal Foreign Office](#) ▶

Applications for a Schengen visa may also be submitted online via the electronic application acquisition system of the Federal Foreign Office.

- [Online Schengen Visa Application Acquisition System of the Federal Foreign Office](#) ▶

Who will issue the visa?

Visas are issued by the German embassy or consulate in the country where the visa application has been made. Foreign nationals applying for a residence permit for the purpose of self-employment or taking up employment receive the permission to enter Germany (national visa) from the German mission abroad.

However, upon entering Germany, foreign nationals with a national visa have to contact the responsible local immigration office (*Ausländerbehörde*) in Germany which issues the respective residence permit for the purpose of self-employment or taking up employment.

Some non-EU nationals may enter Germany without any visa. Any required residence title permitting long-term stays and work (self-employed or employed) can be applied for and issued by the local immigration office in Germany. This applies to citizens from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and the United States.

How long does it take to issue a visa?

A visa for short-term stays (Schengen visa) will usually be issued within around two to ten working days.

For visas permitting the holder to work (self-employed or employed) in Germany, a processing time of a few months should be expected.

The Germany embassies and consulates charge a handling fee of EUR 60 for Schengen visas and national visas respectively.



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