

Visas for Running the Business On-Site

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](#).

The Residence Permit for the Purpose of Self-Employment

Business operators who are from non-EU countries and who manage their company on location in Germany as a self-employed person require a residence permit for the purpose of self-employment (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis für selbständige Tätigkeit*).

This is generally issued if

- an economic interest or a regional need regarding the intended business activity exists,
- positive economic consequences are to be expected from the investment project,
- the planned investment has secure financing in place.

The local immigration office (*Ausländerbehörde*) individually assesses to what extent these criteria are met. It takes into account the following aspects:

- Viability of the underlying business idea
- Investor's entrepreneurial experience
- Level of capital investment and availability of capital
- Effects on the regional employment and (employee) training level
- Contribution towards innovation, research and development in Germany

The immigration office consults the local trade office (*Gewerbeamt*) as well as local trade and business associations, e.g. local Chambers of Industry and Commerce (*Industrie- und Handelskammer*) or the Chambers of Skilled Crafts (*Handwerkskammer*).

Who is considered to be self-employed?

Foreign business operators are considered to be self-employed if they are (e.g.):

- Sole traders (including freelance professions)
- Partners in a partnership
- Managing partners who are no employees of the company
- Managing directors or managerial employees with proxy or full power of attorney who personally carry a business risk

The Settlement Permit

A residence permit for the purpose of self-employment is limited to a maximum of three years.

If the investment project is successful (and success and subsistence appear to be secure over the long term), after three years it is possible to apply for a settlement permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*).

A settlement permit is unrestricted in time and place and automatically includes the right to take up gainful employment.



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