Who Needs a Visa?

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

EU Nationals

Generally, citizens of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) may enter, stay, and work in Germany without any visa. They only have to register at the local registration office (Einwohnermeldeamt), e.g., if they change their residence to Germany. Swiss nationals have to notify the local immigration office about their long-term stay in order to get a residence permit certifying their right to free movement.

Non-EU Nationals

Citizens of non-EU countries generally require a visa to enter, stay, and work in Germany.

For short-term stays in Germany (stays not exceeding 90 days within any 180-day period) a Schengen visa is needed for entry into Germany. A Schengen visa is generally sufficient for most steps required to establish a business in Germany.

Is the duration of the stay exceeding 90 days (within any 180-day period) or is a (self-employed or gainful) occupation taken up, all non-EU citizens require a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) or settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis). For this purpose, the German embassies or consulates issue a national visa for entering Germany which is "transferred" into a residence or settlement permit in Germany.

Nationals of certain countries do not require a visa for entry into or short-term stays in Germany. The Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) provides detailed information on entry requirements into Germany for different countries. Please refer to the following site:

- Entry Requirements into Germany for Different Countries

For detailed information on German residence titles, please read:

- Schengen Visa and National Visa
- Residence Permit and Settlement Permit
Overview of Different Types of Visas for Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Visa</th>
<th>Needed for</th>
<th>Visa Required</th>
<th>Required for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schengen Visa</td>
<td>-Stays in Germany <strong>for up to 90</strong> days within any 180-day period</td>
<td>-Schengen Travel Visa (for business persons in the form of a “business visa”)</td>
<td>-Entrepreneurs setting up businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Visa</td>
<td>-Stays in Germany <strong>exceeding</strong> 90 days</td>
<td>-Residence permit for the purpose of self-employment</td>
<td>-Entrepreneurs running the business in Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Visa</td>
<td>-Stays in Germany <strong>exceeding</strong> 90 days</td>
<td>-Residence permit for the purpose of taking up employment</td>
<td>-Employees working in Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: the type of residence title depends on the investor’s country of origin, the length of the intended stay and the intended business activity in Germany. Read more about the different types of visas for different business activities in Germany on the following sites:

- **Visas for Setting up Business**
- **Visas for Running the Business On-Site**
- **Visa for Employees**