

## Setting up a business as a foreign national

The number of entrepreneurs from other countries who want to set up a business in Switzerland is increasing. Regulations for setting up a business vary according to the entrepreneur's country of origin.

The following overview contains numerous useful indications:

- **Citizens from the EU/EFTA area:**

All EU/EFTA citizens are allowed to set up a company in Switzerland and work in a self-employed capacity. According to the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons, self-employed entrepreneurs who want to set up their own business do not need a permanent residence permit (C permit). A five-year residence permit (B permit) will suffice. Further information is available at the cantonal Immigration Office (Amt für Migration):

Amt für Migration  
Parkstrasse 3  
CH-4402 Frenkendorf  
Tel. +41 (0)61 552 51 61  
Email: [afm@bl.ch](mailto:afm@bl.ch)  
[Website](#)

EU/EFTA citizens need to prove to the Swiss authorities that self-employment in their chosen field is possible in Switzerland. Evidence can be submitted in the form of conclusive corporate documents such as business plans, an application to the Commercial Register, the opening of an office or a workshop, the establishment of a company, accounting documents, etc.

- **Citizens from outside the EU/EFTA area;**

The requirements are different for Non-EU/EFTA nationals. Entitlement to self-employment in Switzerland is limited to the holders of a C permit and/or their spouses. All other Non-EU/EFTA persons have to formally apply to the cantonal authority in charge and furnish credible evidence that their business could have a "sustainably positive influence on the Swiss economy." This means that Non-EU/EFTA entrepreneurs need to present a fairly developed business idea before moving to Switzerland. A strong business plan would be a solid basis for a successful application.

→ Further information:

[SME Portal](#)

[Cantonal Office for Industry, Trade and Employment \(KIGA\)](#)