

Becoming Self-Employed

This document provides information on:

1. **Becoming self-employed – EEA nationals**
2. **Becoming self-employed – non-EEA nationals**
3. **Non-EEA nationals who do not require business permission**
4. **Applying for a business permission**
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6. **How to renew business permission**

1. Becoming self-employed – EEA¹ nationals. What do I need to do?

If you are from the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you can be self-employed in Ireland without getting permission from the Irish Government. The Citizens Information Board's website provides valuable information on this topic and can be found at the following address, <http://www.citizensinformation.ie/categories/employment/types-of-employment/self-employment/self-employment-as-an-individual/?searchterm=Self-Employed>

2. Becoming self-employed – Non-EEA/Swiss nationals. What do I need to do?

In general, if you are not a citizen of the EEA or Switzerland, you must apply for special permission if you want to start your own business and work as a self-employed person in Ireland. This permission is called 'business permission'.

3. Non-EEA nationals who do not require business permission

- People who hold Stamp 4 on their certificate of registration do not need special permission if they want to start a business and be self-employed in Ireland. The exception to this is people who hold Stamp 4 but who are resident on the basis of a working visa or authorisation.

¹The EEA stands for the European Economic Area and includes the countries of the European Union as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

4. Applying for a business permission

◆ What requirements do I need to meet to get permission to start a business?

There are several requirements you need to meet before you can get permission to start a business in Ireland:

- a) Your business must result in the transfer to Ireland of capital of at least €300,000
- b) Your business must create employment for at least two EEA nationals for a new project or, at the very least, maintain employment in an existing business
- c) Your business must add to the commercial activity and competitiveness of Ireland
- d) Your business must generate enough income to be able to support you and any family members or your dependants (such as children or elderly parents)
- e) You must hold a valid passport or national identity document and be of 'good character'

◆ Are there any exceptions to these requirements?

You may not need to meet requirements (a) and (b) if:

- You have been legally resident and employed in Ireland for at least five years
- The Minister for Justice makes an exception and allows you to set up a business without satisfying these requirements. For example, if your business would make a special contribution to the Irish economy
- You are a citizen of Turkey
- You are a writer, an artist or a crafts person, in which case you should contact the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform separately in relation to becoming self-employed

◆ How do I apply for permission to start a business?

You need to make an application for permission to start a business by writing to the Irish Government explaining what kind of business you would like to set up.

You should include the following documents with your application:

- Your valid passport or national identity document
- Your registration certificate if you are already residing in the State
- A statement of character from the police authorities of each country in which you have lived for more than six months during the 10 year period before making your application
- A business plan that meets the relevant requirements. Your business plan should be looked at and endorsed by a firm of accountants or a financial institution

The application should be sent to the following address:

Business Permission Unit
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
13-14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2

If you are granted business permission, you will need to register with your local immigration office. If you live in Dublin, you should go to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2). If you live outside Dublin, you should go to the main Garda station in the area where you live.

You will be issued with a Certificate of Registration (also known as a GNIB card) with Stamp No. 1 as business permissions are generally issued for one year initially. Your Certificate of Registration will be issued for one year as well.

5. If an application is refused

If your application is turned down you will be informed in writing. You can appeal this decision within one month of the date of refusal.

6. How do I renew my business permission?

You need to apply to the Department of Justice to renew your business permission about one month before your current one expires. The application to renew your business permission should be sent to the same address as the initial application.

You will need to provide audited accounts and tax details. If you satisfy the criteria for renewal, your business permission will be extended for another year. Further renewals after this may be granted for a period of five years.

For more information on this or any other matter related to getting business permission, contact the ICI's Information and Support Service.

ICI Information and Support Service contact details:

Contact Details

Our Information and Support Service can be contacted by telephone on **(01) 674 0200 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 4.30pm**. Clients with general enquiries may be referred to another agency for assistance.

Clients with complex cases may be offered an appointment to speak to an Information and Support Officer in person on a confidential basis.

From January 2009, consultations with Information and Support Officers will be **by appointment only**.

Immigrant Council of Ireland
2 St Andrew Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

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