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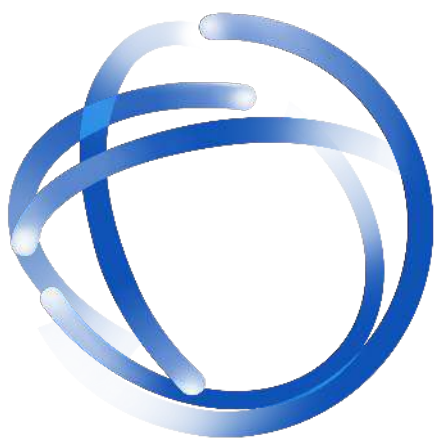
STARTUP

Country Guide 2023

THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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CHAPTER 1

Exploring the startup sphere

I. The Cypriot entrepreneurial ecosystem

Cyprus has emerged as a thriving hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, showcasing promising ventures spanning various sectors, including education, health, fintech, and many others. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Cyprus has evolved thanks to a robust foundation led by various stakeholders who promote collaboration and facilitate a culture of innovation.

Cyprus' ease of doing business is strengthened by its strategic location, its alignment with the EU regulatory environment, and by its pro-business tax and legal systems. The government maintains a commitment to prioritizing the digital transformation of the economy, positioning the country as an appealing destination for entrepreneurs and investors, particularly as remote and hybrid work cultures have gained prominence.



1. Startup definition

Overall, a startup is an innovative venture with the potential for high growth, driven by technology and characterized by having a functional prototype and a scalable, repeatable business model. Startups are founded to explore creative ideas, often centered around technology, and to capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

The European Startup Monitor defines a startup as a business entity that is less than ten (10) years old, known for its (highly) innovative technologies and/or business models, and has the objective of achieving substantial employee and/or sales growth.

Definitions of startups and entrepreneurial entities can vary between countries and organizations. Cyprus generally followed the European Union's approach to startups, but specific definitions could be found in various government programs and initiatives. The government's definitions were often used for eligibility in grants, incentives, and support programs.

The government of Cyprus has introduced the "innovative SMEs" certificate to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that can demonstrate their innovative nature. Startups can apply to obtain the certificate to benefit from tax incentives, grants, access to research and development funds, and other forms of assistance to avail the incentives.

Further elaboration and references to key initiatives, such as the eligibility of startups to those incentives, will be presented in the 'Government Incentives' section below.

2. Promising sectors in Cyprus

Promising sectors in Cyprus leverage the country's strengths, including its favorable regulatory environment and strategic location. Fintech and tourism tech are capitalizing on Cyprus status as an international business hub. Healthtech and renewable energy domains are actively aligning with global trends addressing health challenges and sustainability. E-commerce and Agritech sectors are also experiencing growth driven by shifting consumer preferences and heightened environmental awareness.

Here are some of the key areas where startups are thriving, along with success examples:



Fintech

Ask Wire provides real estate intelligence to banks, insurers, companies, and Environmental, Social, and Governance-conscious investors. The platform creates a comprehensive profile of each European property by gathering data from various sources, including government databases, satellite images and so forth.



Tourism and Hospitality Tech

Bookaway is an online booking platform that was founded in Cyprus and focuses on travel and tourism. It allows travelers to book ground transportation (buses, ferries, etc.) in various countries, making it more convenient for tourists to plan their trips.



HealthTech

Simple is on a mission to help people move to a healthy diet through a gradual change of habits and the introduction of food discipline.



Education Technology

Engino is a solution that provides a smooth transition from simple models to advanced robotics, utilizing connecting geometries, specially designed to be compatible throughout all age levels.



Blockchain and Cryptocurrency

Policy advancements: Cyprus is also becoming a hub for blockchain and cryptocurrency startups, via developing policies tailored for the promotion of this promising sector:

- **Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission (CySEC):** CySEC has been regulating financial services in Cyprus, including those related to cryptocurrencies and initial coin offerings (ICOs). The regulatory framework for crypto assets has been evolving to address potential risks and ensure consumer protection.
- **Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Know Your Customer (KYC) Regulations:** Cyprus, like many countries, has been implementing AML and KYC regulations to prevent illicit activities in the cryptocurrency space. Service providers dealing with cryptocurrencies are required to adhere to these regulations.
- **Taxation:** Cyprus has established a tax framework for cryptocurrencies. Depending on the nature of cryptocurrency transactions, they may be subject to capital gains tax or income tax.
- **AML and Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) Compliance:** Cyprus is committed to complying with EU directives and international standards related to AML and CTF. This includes enhanced scrutiny and compliance measures for crypto-related businesses.

3. Cyprus' startup scene

To provide a comprehensive insight into the startup scene of Cyprus, the data below is built upon a synthesis of data sourced from reputable platforms. It provides an approximate count of the Startup Support Organizations (SSOs), i.e., incubators, accelerators, and coworking spaces, currently in operation.

Cyprus' top startup industry sectors by funding¹ (2022):

- Edtech and Education
- Travel
- Transportation
- Gaming

Cyprus' top startup industry sectors by number of startups² (2022):

- Health
- Social and Leisure
- Fintech

Startup ecosystem in numbers

- Funds raised by startups until Q3 - 2023³: EUR 170.86 million
- Number of operating startups⁴: +446
- Incubators and accelerators⁵: +8
- Coworking spaces⁵: +10

Entrepreneurship and innovation in Cyprus: Rankings (2022)

Indicator	Ranking	Indicator	Ranking
Global entrepreneurship ⁶	33	Business environment ⁷	70
Global innovation ⁷	27	Political and operational stability ⁷	35
Growth of innovative companies ⁷	46	Collaboration between companies ⁷	10
Knowledge workers ⁷	33	Regulatory environment ⁷	24
ICT access ⁷	4	Market access and infrastructure ⁷	28
Mobile application creation ⁷	1	Economic freedom ⁸	23
Financing of SMEs ⁷	53		

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt and khaki pants, is smiling while looking at a tablet computer. He is standing in front of a glass wall, and his reflection is visible in the glass. The background is a blurred office interior.

CHAPTER 2

Beginning your entrepreneurial journey

I. Guiding steps to launch a startup in Cyprus

1. Country specific legal structures

In Cyprus, entrepreneurs can choose among five (5) distinct types of legal structures, each tailored to suit their company's specific activities. Each business type possesses unique attributes designed to accommodate distinct economic objectives. Below, are the legal structures particularly suitable for entrepreneurs to contemplate when establishing their startups.

- **A private limited liability company by shares**
- **A public limited liability company by shares**
- **A limited liability company by guarantee without share capital**
- **A limited liability company by guarantee with share capital**
- **A variable capital investment company**
- **A sole proprietorship**

The most common legal structure chosen by registered Cypriot startups is the **Private Limited Company by shares**. This preference arises from the inherent advantage that this structure offers, limiting the liability of owners and shareholders to their proportionate share of invested capital, thereby safeguarding their personal assets. A Private Limited Company by shares possesses share capital, and the responsibility of its members is restricted, as outlined in its memorandum of association, to any outstanding amounts for the shares they own. A private limited liability company by shares is required to have a minimum of one (1) shareholder but no more than fifty (50).

However, Cypriot entrepreneurs embark on their startup ventures through other less common structures, namely pre-startups, often known as university spinoffs, and foreign branches. Cypriot universities, such as the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology, have been actively involved in fostering spin-offs. These universities have established technology transfer offices and business incubators to support the creation and growth of spin-off companies.



2. Legal steps

The Government of Cyprus extends institutional support and resources for the simplified legal establishment of your startup, as elaborated in the legal steps below. The Companies section within the Department Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property (DRCIP) is the pivotal institution overseeing company name reservation and the overall incorporation of your startup.

The Cyprus Department of Taxation and the Department of Social Insurance provides guidance throughout the process of securing a tax identification number and enrolling in the social insurance scheme. Additionally, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy is responsible for evaluating and administering certificates of innovative SMEs, which confer various incentives to eligible Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

On average, it takes eight (8) working days to have a company registered in Cyprus. However, the precise sequencing may be influenced by the business' characteristics and the legal framework. Below is an overview of the fundamental legal steps typically required by both locals and foreigners wishing to start a business in Cyprus.



● Step 1: Verify the startup activity

For regulated activities, the entrepreneur must request permission, consent, or pre-approval from the relevant authority to be authorized to operate within the national territory. These activities and related sectors are found in the [list of regulated activities in Cyprus](#). No such verification is required for un-regulated activities.

● Step 2: Register on the governmental portal

To facilitate the submission of applications for name approval, company registration, and the issuance of certified copies, among other processes, access to the e-filing system is a prerequisite. To gain this access, individuals and businesses must register on the government gateway portal at gov.cy.

It is worth noting that filing documents for a registered company via the [e-filing system](#) necessitates the acquisition of the business entity's authorization code.

Steps

- 1 Fill in and submit the [application to register your business entity](#) via email to efilingcodes@drcor.meci.gov.cy, to receive your authorization code
- 2 Register by creating an account in the [e-Filing](#) system (for further details, you can follow this [registration process](#))

● Step 3: Obtain approval for a company name

Before proceeding with the incorporation of your company, you must first decide upon the proposed name for your company, which will have to be available and approved by the Department Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property (DRCIP). The proposed name is approved if it is not very similar to the name of an already existing business entity and is neither [misleading or undesirable](#).

Steps

- 1 Conduct anteriority research at the following [page](#) from the DRCIP website
- 2 Submit the application for approval to the Registrar of Companies via [e-filing](#). You are also allowed to submit the application by [hand or by post](#)
- 3 Check the result of the approval via [e-service](#)

Documents

- Form for name approval or name change
- Permission, consent, or preapproval by the relevant governmental authority, if required

Cost

- One name proposition: 10 EUR
- Accelerated approval process per name: 20 EUR

● Step 4: Draft the memorandum of association

In this step, the entrepreneur chooses a company structure to establish a new legal entity. The memorandum of association can be drafted by the entrepreneur or with the assistance of a professional, such as a chartered accountant or a corporate lawyer.

● Step 5: Apply to incorporate your company and obtain the registration certificates

Once your company name is approved, follow the steps below to finalize your company registration. Upon confirmation from the Registrar of Companies that all legal requirements for the company registration have been met, the Registrar will publish the company's registration in the Official Gazette and issue the certificate of incorporation. Entrepreneurs can request other certified copies and certificates of companies through the e-filing system using the following process.

Steps

- 1 Submit your request online through the Registrar of Companies' e-filing system

Requirements

- You can also choose to submit the necessary documents by hand or by post
- Documents must be translated through a certified translation provider
- Form HE5 is only applicable for a public limited liability company by shares

Documents

- A statutory declaration ([Form HE1](#)) signed and sworn by the entrusted lawyer before the court
- A notification of the company's registered office address ([form HE2](#))
- A notification regarding the information of the company's first directors and secretary ([form HE3](#))
- The memorandum of association written in Greek
- A name approval consent
- The solemn [declaration of the witness of signatures](#)
- Permission, consent, or pre-approval by the relevant governmental authority or appropriate body, if necessary

Cost

- Companies with a share capital: 165 EUR
- Companies without a share capital: 235 EUR
- Accelerated company registration process: 100 EUR

● **Step 6:** Obtain a certificate of a public company's commencement of business (applies to public limited liability companies)

A public limited liability company will not be allowed to start business operations or obtain loans unless it issues the certificate of commencement of business from the Registrar of Companies. The required documents are submitted by hand or post.

Documents

- Form [HE9](#)
- Proof of payment
- An invitation to subscribe if any issued by the company
- Form [HE8](#) if the company hasn't issued an invitation to subscribe

Cost

- 2,020 EUR
- Additional fees to accelerate the process: 20 EUR

● Step 7: Obtain the tax identification number

The tax registration for your startup should be carried out at the premises of the Cyprus Department of Taxation within sixty (60) days of the start of operations. The Department of Taxation will issue a Tax Identification Number (TIN) at the end of the process.

Steps

- 1 Book an appointment at the nearest Department of Taxation Office
- 2 Fill in and submit the form T.D 2001 to request a tax identifier number

Documents

- A copy of business name registration certificate
- A copy of the certificate of incorporation
- A copy of the certificate of registered office
- A copy of the certificate of directors and secretary
- A copy of the certificate of shareholders, where applicable

Duration

Up to three (3) working days

● Step 8: Register for Value Added Tax (VAT)

You must register for VAT if the taxable transactions value of your goods and services carried out over the twelve (12) preceding months – or which will be carried out within the next (30) days – exceeds or will exceed EUR 15,600.

Steps

- 1 Book an appointment at the nearest Department of Taxation Office
- 2 Fill in and submit the form T.D. 1101

Documents

- A copy of an identity document
- A copy of business name registration certificate
- A copy of the certificate of incorporation
- A copy of the certificate of registered office
- A copy of the certificate of directors and secretary
- A copy of the certificate of shareholders, where applicable
- A proof document, i.e., a contract or an invoice, showing the entity's taxable activities in Cyprus

Duration

Up to twelve (12) days

● Step 9: Register for the social security service of Cyprus

Contribution to Cyprus' social insurance scheme is mandatory for all employers. The scheme encompasses all individuals engaged in for-profit activities within Cyprus. Visit the Department of Social Insurance website for more information.

Steps

- 1 Submit the employer registration application form at the Department of Social Insurance

Documents

[Employer registration application form](#)

● Step 10: Request the certificate of innovative SMEs (optional)

Upon registering your company, consider applying for the certificate of the Innovative SMEs if your company meets the qualifying conditions mentioned in the following paragraph. As mentioned earlier, this certificate is issued by the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy. This would entitle individuals investing in your company qualified as Innovative SME to enjoy a tax deduction up to 50% of their taxable income.

SMEs, including startups, qualify as 'innovative SMEs' if:

- Their operations are carried out in the Republic of Cyprus, and.
- They have business plans for their risk finance investment, and they fulfill at least one of the following conditions:
 - They do not operate in any other market.
 - They have not been operating in any market for more than seven (7) years following their first commercial sale (this restriction does not, under certain conditions, apply for follow-on investments).
 - They require an initial risk finance investment which, based on a business plan prepared with the prospect of entering a new product or geographical market, is higher than 50% of their average annual turnover in the preceding five (5) years.

The Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digital Policy assesses innovative SMEs based on three predefined categories (A, B, and C). To determine your eligibility for each category, please refer to the [Innovative SMEs guide](#).

Steps

- 1 Submit the application form along with your category relevant documents to the following email innovative.companies@dmrid.gov.cy

Or

- 1 Visit the [Ignite platform](#)
- 2 Initiate the process by submitting the company name, email, and contact person
- 3 Select the category of your startup from the categories mentioned above A, B or C)
- 4 Submit the required documents

Requirements

- Innovative SMEs should not be listed on the Cyprus or any other stock exchange

Documents

Category A

- [Application form](#)
- Certificate [form](#) external auditors

Category B

- [Application form](#)
- Business plan (here are [guidelines](#) and [criteria](#) for business plans)

Category C

- Proof of secured EIC funding; or
- Proof of EIC SEAL of excellence; or
- Proof of secured RIF innovation program funding; or
- Proof of secured startup visa.

II. Other country specific considerations

1. Considerations for foreign investors

A foreign investor willing to establish a business in Cyprus can gain significant advantages, including access to the European market and the strategic geographical positioning that bridges Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The Government of Cyprus has introduced a new “Strategy for Attracting Businesses for Activities or/and Expansion of their Activities in Cyprus” to attract foreign enterprises and skilled professionals to the nation. This strategy predominantly targets high-technology, shipping, pharmaceutical, innovation, and R&D companies, including startups. It encompasses a range of incentives related to residency, taxation, and employment, all facilitated by a quick and streamlined process.

Invest Cyprus is the agency entrusted with delivering rapid and efficient services to foreign enterprises seeking to establish a presence in Cyprus or expand their business operations.

The Cypriot Government has fully liberalized direct investment by foreign nationals in every business sector. Therefore, 100% foreign ownership is permitted, unless the company operates in banking, financial services, and media. However, these restrictions do not apply to EU nationals. 100% foreign-owned and Cyprus-based companies require at least one (1) shareholder, one (1) director of any nationality who can either be an individual or a corporate entity, and one (1) secretary.

Another important aspect for foreign entrepreneurs establishing their business in Cyprus is the official language used in all official documents within the country, which is Greek. Consequently, documentation for company registration is issued in the Greek language.

After the enactment of the Registration and Regulation of Sworn Translator Services Law 45 (I)/2019, foreign entrepreneurs or investors seeking to translate official documents must liaise directly with certified translators registered with the Register of Sworn Translators under the Council of Sworn Translators.

2. Filing obligations

Filing obligations may vary depending on the type and size of the business entity. Here are the main filing obligations for your startup:

Value-Added tax (VAT)

VAT is submitted electronically via the Tax Department portal on a quarterly basis, and the payment of must be remitted by the tenth day of the second month following the conclusion of the VAT period. The standard VAT rate is 19%, its registration is required for businesses with a turnover of more than EUR 15,600 during the twelve (12) previous months or an expected turnover of more than EUR 15,600 within the next thirty (30) days.

Social security contributions

Contributions are done monthly. They can be made in the form of cash or by issuing bank cheques payable to the Director of Social Insurance Services. For payment, the company owner or an authorized representative of the employer has the option to personally visit any Social Insurance District Office or pay via the social insurance online services.

Income tax return

Companies must file an annual corporate tax return, with the Cyprus [Tax Department portal](#). Payment is due on 31st of March of each year.

Annual levy

Companies registered in the Registrar of Companies, are mandated to pay an annual flat EUR 350 on or before the 30th of June for each year of their operation via the [portal](#) of the Registrar of Companies.

3. Financial reporting and auditing regulations

In accordance with the Companies Law in Cyprus (Cap.113), a company is obliged to prepare Financial Statements in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Those Statements must be audited by an independent registered auditor in Cyprus in accordance with International Standards of Auditing (ISA's).

The use of a certified Cypriot public accountant is necessary if the company is a Public Limited Company by shares; or does not meet the criteria for a small business (Small-sized companies are companies that do not exceed two (2) of the following three (3) criteria at the closing date of their balance sheet: a) A total balance sheet of EUR 4 million, b) A net turnover of EUR 8 million, c) An average number of employees: 50).



A photograph of a modern office building interior. The image shows a multi-story structure with glass railings and large windows. People are visible working at desks on different levels. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is professional and contemporary.

CHAPTER 3

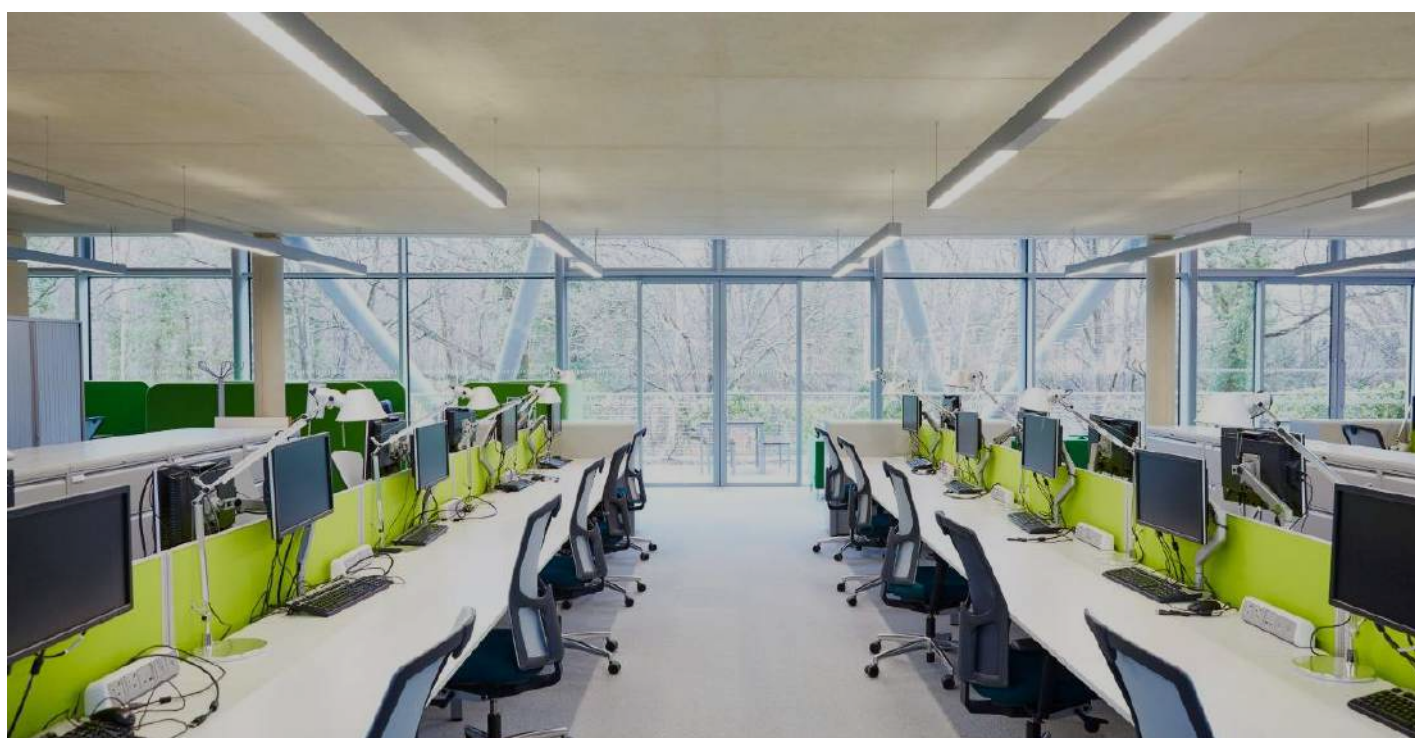
Navigating startup regulations
and incentives

I. Government Incentives

1. Tax incentives

The Cypriot tax, legal and regulatory system provides an excellent framework for businesses of all sizes with an extensive Non-Double Tax Treaty network covering approximately seventy (70) countries and providing for several tax benefits to startups as well as their foreign or local investors in Cypriot startups. The following are tax concessions for startups:

- Corporate tax for Cypriot tax resident companies is currently one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the European Union, standing at 12.5% for each year of assessment on income derived from sources both within and outside Cyprus.
- Cypriot technology companies, including startups, that produce intellectual property are entitled to an 80% tax exemption, thus reducing the corporate tax rate to an effective rate of 2.5%.
- Cyprus tax resident companies, including startups, are entitled to claim a Notional Interest Deduction (NID) as a tax-deductible expense, upon the introduction of new equity, with the ceiling of up to 80% of the taxable profits generated from this new equity.
- An increased additional deduction of 20% is applicable to the costs accrued for research and development along with deductibility of 100% expenses, with certain conditions considered.
- Cypriot tax resident companies, including startups, are entitled to carry forward tax losses incurred during a given tax year over the subsequent five (5) tax years, and offset them against the correspondent taxable profits, thus allowing the company to enjoy reduced effective tax rates in the future. This is particularly important for startups since they commonly incur losses in their early stages of operations.
- Income generated from foreign investments is generally exempt from Corporate Income Tax in Cyprus, except for dividends that are eligible for tax deductions by the paying company.
- Capital gains from disposals of shares in tax-resident Cypriot startups are exempt from corporate income tax as per the Cypriot domestic tax law.



- A qualifying investor engaging in a risk-financed investment within an SME having an “innovative SME” certificate is eligible to deduct the associated investment expenses from their taxable income. The tax deduction is limited to 50% of the investor’s taxable income in the year in which the investment is made, as calculated before allowing for this deduction but after allowing deductions for life insurance premiums and contributions to provident and other approved funds. The total deductible amount may not exceed EUR 150,000 per year. The remaining investment cost not claimed as tax deductible may be carried forward and deducted from the taxable income of the subsequent five years, subject to the aforementioned restrictions. Investors earning dividends from a Cypriot tax-resident company, including a startup, are exempt from taxation as per the Cypriot domestic tax law, subject to certain exceptions.
- Investors earning dividends from a Cypriot tax-resident company, including a startup, are exempt from taxation as per the Cypriot domestic tax law, subject to certain exceptions.



2. Non tax financial incentives

This section explores the diverse range of non-tax incentives in Cyprus, starting from providing of funds supporting entrepreneurship to programs promoting innovation and investment, all contributing to the nation's economic vitality and global competitiveness:

The Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund (CYPEF)

CYPEF, established by the Republic of Cyprus, is a dedicated fund aimed at fostering and fortifying entrepreneurship within the nation. Its core mission is to facilitate improved access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises, including startups. The financial resources allocated to CYPEF are sourced from the European Investment Bank (EIB). CYPEF extends its support to enterprises and self-employed entrepreneurs registered in Cyprus in the form of reduced rates and reduced collateral requirements etc. and operating across a wide spectrum of economic sectors under the social insurance scheme.

THALIA 2021-2027

THALIA is a multi-annual, multi-fund development Program. It aims to create a robust and competitive economy through smart, digital, and green investments. With a total budget of the EUR 1.81 billion, THALIA supports projects in a variety of areas, including green transition, digital transition, and social cohesion.

Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF)

The Research and Innovation Foundation (RIF) operates through co-funding from both the Cypriot Government and the European Union's structural funds. RIF serves as the primary national authority dedicated to the facilitation and advancement of research, technological development, and innovation in Cyprus. It provides an extensive array of services and programs, contingent upon eligibility and stringent qualitative criteria. Among the financing mechanisms made available for startups, RIF may cover a significant portion, up to 85%, of the initial capital investment for research and development.

BRIDGE2HORIZON

BRIDGE2HORIZON plays a role in bridging the local research and innovation ecosystem with the European framework program "Horizon Europe". Its primary objective is to confront the issues of limited participation and vulnerabilities among Cypriot actors by bolstering their capacities. Furthermore, the program seeks to amplify the number of projects carried out by Cypriot institutions and enhance the overall quality of proposals submitted to 'Horizon Europe'. Notably, the total fund allocated for BRIDGE2HORIZON amounts to EUR 6 million, with an upper cap of EUR 150,000 designated for each project beneficiary.



II. Labor and immigration regulations and facilitations

1. Startup visa

The startup visa allows skilled entrepreneurs from non-European Union (EU) and non-European Economic Area (EEA) countries to enter, reside, and work in Cyprus. This facilitates the establishment and operation of startups exhibiting significant growth potential.

According to the authority in charge, the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation & Digital Policy, an innovative startup is defined as a venture that develops new innovations, creating a sustainable competitive advantage in the future. The benefits of this visa for an individual or a team can be found in the following [link](#). The startup visa offers two (2) different schemes:

Team startup visa scheme

Designed for a team of up to five (5) individuals, coming from non-EU countries. The team should consist solely of the founders of an innovative startup or at least of one (1) founder and other senior executives. Additionally, more than 50% of the company's shares should be owned by one (1) or more member(s) of the team of applicants.

Individual startup visa scheme

Designed for non-EU and non-EEA country nationals who will act as the sole founder of an innovative startup.

Steps

- 1 Submit the relevant documents detailed in the section below via email to the following address startupvisa@dmrid.gov.cy
- 2 In the case of a positive evaluation, the applicant will receive a notification of initial approval that grants the right for economic activity in Cyprus for two years
- 3 Submit an entry visa application to the [Consular Authorities of the Republic](#) or to the Department of Civil Registry and Migration, within six (6) months of receiving initial approval
- 4 Apply for a residence permit at the [Civil Registry and Migration Department's headquarters in Nicosia](#). To learn more about appointments, please follow this [link](#)

Requirements

- The candidate must be at least eighteen (18) years old

- The candidate must confirm the availability of the capital of EUR 20,000 or EUR 10,000 if the founders are less than two (2)
- The candidate must be proficient in Greek or English
- The candidate must have completed a diploma of higher education
- In case the startup already exists, the applicant must submit an audit report
- To apply for a temporary residence and employment permit, foreign nationals must provide their biometric data (photo and fingerprints) and signature, along with the payment receipt and a valid travel document
- The biometric data can be provided simultaneously with the application, at the District Immigration Unit of the Cyprus Police of the district of residence of the applicant
- Collecting biometric data is also necessary for the renewal of a temporary residence and employment permit

Documents

- Business plan (forms and templates are found in the following [link](#))
- [Application form](#) for Startup visa
- Curriculum vitae
- Copy of a valid passport
- [Supporting documents](#) for the residence permit as mentioned in the link
- All supporting documents submitted in the context of applications must be officially translated and duly certified

Cost

Entry permit and a residence permit, valid for up to three (3) years: 70 EUR

Registration in the aliens' register (applies in first registration): 70 EUR

Renewal of a residence permit, valid for up to three (3) years: 80 EUR



III. Data protection

Data protection in Cyprus is regulated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union (EU) regulation that applies to all EU Member States, including Cyprus. Cyprus has incorporated the GDPR into its national law, and the [Office of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection in Cyprus](#) oversees the implementation and enforcement of data protection regulations.

The Commissioner fulfills the responsibilities and powers assigned to them under the provisions of the [Law 125\(I\) of 2018 Providing For The Protection of Natural Persons with regard to the Processing of Personal Data and for the Free Movement of Such Data](#) and it has adopted certain [guidelines](#).

Those guidelines encompass a variety of topics, including and not limited to:

- Data Protection Officers
- Data Protection Impact Assessments
- Personal data breach notifications
- Codes of conduct and certification mechanisms (Both are only available in Greek)
- Security of processing and the guidelines on the security of processing (only available in Greek)
- Data transfers (only available in Greek)
- Guide to records of processing activities and Guide to complete the record of processing activities
- Video-surveillance (only available in Greek)
- Directions to banking institutions about retention periods for personal data (only available in Greek)

To ensure that the company protects customers' data and avoids costly fines for non-compliance, founders must meet all the requirements on the [GDPR compliance checklist](#).



IV. Intellectual property

Intellectual property rights in Cyprus are protected by national, European legislation, as well as international agreements. Under these agreements, you can claim ownership over the creation of an invention, a design, a distinctive mark, or an artistic work etc. The protection of these creations gives you an exclusive or unique right of exploitation. It gives you the right to take judicial and other measures for their protection in case of unlawful unauthorized copying and use by third parties.

There are four (4) types of intellectual property rights: patents, trademarks, industrial designs, and copyrights. In the section below, we will cover the steps you need to know, to receive protection under three (3) types based on their relevance to startups. The application process takes place at the [Intellectual Property Section](#) of the Department of Registrar Companies and Intellectual Property.

1. Patents

A patent is a legal document that grants the holder exclusive rights to an invention for a defined period of time. It is a key element of intellectual property (IP) protection. In Cyprus, an initial patent application has a two-year validity period that can be renewed yearly. This renewal can extend the patent's protection for up to twenty (20) years from the application or grant date. Patents are granted by the Department of Registrar Companies and Intellectual Property, and they serve several purposes in protecting intellectual property.

Steps

Check the eligibility of your invention for patent protection based on the requirements below

1 Use the links below to conduct a comprehensive search and ensure that your invention is unique:

- [Espacenet of the European Patent Organisation \(EPO\)](#)
- [Patentscope of the World Intellectual Property Organisation \(WIPO\)](#)
- [Official Journal of EPO](#)
- [Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus](#)
- Paper Patents Register at the premises of the Intellectual Property Section

2 Submit the application for a national patent by hand or by post to the Department of the Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property

Requirements

- The application must provide a clear and complete description of the invention
- The invention must adhere to ethical and moral standards and must not violate public order
- Certified translation should be in English, German, or French, either by an affidavit or by a sworn translator of the Republic of Cyprus
- The invention must be new and not part of the public domain

- The invention should have a practical use in an industry
- For further details on the process, please refer to the [main criteria of review](#)
- A cleaning contract (optional, depending on the contract and type of activity)

Documents

- The patent application form [Form Π.9](#)
- The description of the invention
- The claims defining the scope of the patent
- The summary
- The relevant drawings, if any
- The form for authorizing an agent [form π.8](#)

Cost

- Physical search fees: 5 EUR
- Submission fees: 100 EUR



2. Trademarks

Each company should consider registering its trademark. Trademark registration lasts ten (10) years and is renewable indefinitely. Please note that, before submitting the application, you may apply for an intellectual property preliminary opinion. Opinion is requested through the [trademark's e-filing system](#) or [by hand / post](#). Visit this [link](#) to understand the types of trademarks and watch this [video](#) to learn how to protect your trademark.

Steps

- 1 Ensure your sign, logo, or brand is [eligible for trademark protection in Cyprus](#)
- 2 Conduct a comprehensive search to check existing trademarks that may conflict with your proposed trademark, through the following links:
 - [Online Registry of National Trademarks](#)
 - [TMView](#)
 - [eSearch Plus](#)
 - [Global Brand Database](#)
 - [WIPO Madrid Monitor](#)
 - [Official Gazette](#)
- 3 Create your CY login through this [link](#)
- 4 Complete the necessary application forms and submit them either through the [trademark's e-filing system](#) or [by hand/post](#) to the Cyprus Department of the Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property
- 5 Once published and not contested, the trademark will be published by the Registrar of Companies

Documents

- [form E.Σ. 01](#) for preliminary opinion
- Completed trademark application [form E.Σ 02](#)
- A representation of the mark, for non-word trademarks
- If claiming priority, provide:
 - A statement with date and country of the earlier filing
 - A certified copy of the earlier filing or certificate of filing from the relevant authority
 - A certified translation of priority documents into Greek if they're not already in Greek

Cost

First trademark application by hand/post: 141 EUR

First trademark electronic application: 129 EUR

Additional trademark application beyond the first (online): 102 EUR

Additional trademark application beyond the first application: 94 EUR

First class preliminary opinion: 99 EUR

3. Industrial Designs

If your startup is involved in the design of products, you can protect the appearance design of these products by registering the correspondent industrial designs. The first registration is valid for the first five (5) years and can be extended up to twenty-five (25) years from the initial filing date by renewing it every five (5) years. Watch this [video](#) for more details on the protection process.

Steps

- 1 Ensure that your industrial design is eligible for protection in Cyprus based on the requirements below
- 2 Search to check for similar or conflicting registered designs, through the following link:
 - [Design View of the European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#)
 - [eSearch plus of the European Union Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#)
 - [World Intellectual Property Organisation \(WIPO\)](#)
 - [Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus](#)
- 3 Prepare your design or model
- 4 Complete the required application forms listed below and submit them to the Department of the Registrar of Companies and Intellectual Property by hand or by post

Requirements

The stylization of your design or model must have the following specifications:

- Have a quality graphic or photographic representation
- Be suitable for reproduction
- Be submitted on a white background (photographic representations)
- Should not exceed 6x6 centimeters

- The appearance of the product must be numbered and described (e.g., front view)
- Determine the image (e.g., “front view of image”)
- For more details, check the prerequisites set by the Department of Registrar Companies and Intellectual Property

Documents

- The stylization of your design
- Industrial design or model form BΣY1

Cost

- Five (5) years protection fees: 85.43 EUR
- Additional fees for first five (5) years: 51.26 EUR
- Publication fees: 68.34 EUR
- Publication postponement fees: 42.72 EUR



V. Key support organizations and initiatives (not exhaustive)

Media Outlets & Events

[Clustering – EU Innovative Entrepreneurship](#)

[Cyprus Mail](#)

[Future Talks](#)

[IFX EXPO](#)

[IMH](#)

[InBusiness](#)

[Reflect](#)

[Techstars – Start up Digest](#)

[Zero One hundred](#)

Accelerators & Incubators

[ARIS](#)

[Chrysalis Leap](#)

[Cyprusseeds](#)

[Gravity](#)

[IDEA Innovation Center](#)

[START UP Center](#)

[Tech hub](#)

[Unity](#)

Government Support

[Chief Scientist for research & innovation](#)

[Cyprus Invest](#)

[Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

[Deputy Ministry, Innovation and Digital Policy](#)

[European Investment Foundation](#)

[Ministry of Commerce Industry](#)

[Research & innovation foundation](#)

Coworking spaces

[Antwork](#)

[Cyprusinno](#)

[Hub](#)

[Hügge coworking space](#)

[iDesk.Space](#)

[Regus - Limassol, Victory House](#)

[Regus - Nicosia, 121 Prodromou Avenue](#)

[Regus - Nicosia, Jacovides Tower](#)

[SOHO Coworking Space](#)

[Native](#)

[Youth Makers Space](#)

[Workin](#)

Funding institutions

[33EAST](#)

[Crowdbase](#)

[Cyban](#)

[Gain Venture Studios](#)

[KV Fund](#)

[“Lifeline” Support for Businesses – EU Innovative Entrepreneurship](#)

[Whitebeam](#)

[Zero Gravity Capital](#)

Research & Centers of Excellence:

[Center for entrepreneurship](#)

[Cerdies](#)

[CMMI –Cyprus Marine](#)

[Cyens](#)

[ECECT](#)

[EOC02 Center of Excellence](#)

[ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence](#)

[International Water Research center](#)

[KIOS](#)

Competitions and Awards

[Beyond Pre-Accelerator - JA Cyprus](#)

[CASSINI Space Entrepreneurship Initiative](#)

[ClimateLaunchpad](#)

[CyEC Competition](#)

[SDG Innovation Pre-Accelerator Programme - CyprusInno](#)

[SG Challenge](#)

[Startups for Peace](#)

Corporates & consultancies

[ADDTIESS](#)

[Beight Bells](#)

[Capatior & Partners](#)

[Deloitte](#)

[PWC](#)

[The Bsidian.co](#)

[VIZ Ventures](#)

[Xcelix](#)

Institutions & NGOs

[Cyprus Computer Society](#)

[JA Cyprus](#)

[JCI Cyprus](#)

[STARTUP Cyprus](#)

[Tech Island](#)

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Launching your startup: key success factors

Addressing market demand

Your startup should provide a compelling solution to a specific problem within a large and eager market. Think of it as a puzzle piece that fits perfectly into the demand landscape. Steve Blank's Customer Development Model can guide you in creating a product or service that customers cannot resist.

Feasibility analysis

Conduct a thorough feasibility analysis. This process empowers you to make informed decisions, spot areas needing improvement, and allocate resources effectively. It is your tool for maximizing your chances of crafting a successful, long-lasting venture.

Market insights

Dive deep into market analysis. Understand the current state of your industry segment and define your target market. A strong grasp of market dynamics is essential for positioning your product or service effectively.

Building a stellar team and network

Source and group a team of multitalented experts. This is one of the fundamental steps to scale a startup. These diverse talents will complement each other and will help you access a strong, interconnected network that can be your secret weapon for gaining support, mentorship, and continuous learning.

Analyzing the competition

Competitive analysis is not just about sizing up rivals; it is a vital part of your strategic planning, systematic research and evaluation of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses. It will guide you into finding your competitive edge and creating your added value on the market.

Legal Flexibility

The legal form of a startup must allow for flexibility. Choose a legal structure for your startup that offers the flexibility needed for growth. Make it easy for shareholders to join and leave the company and ensure your memorandum of association can adapt to your evolving needs. In fact, the memorandum of association must be drawn up freely and allow the opening of share capital.

Appendix 2: What type of support to expect at each stage of a startup lifecycle

	Startup development stages	Government support	Funders support	SSOs support
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idea formation Problem validation Team establishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote entrepreneurs hip education Facilitate Ideation: Hackathons, startup Weekends, etc. Promote innovation and entrepreneurs hip culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial literacy and entrepreneurs hip awareness programs Networking opportunities to connect with potential mentors, advisors, and industry experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to experienced mentors who provide guidance and advice on various aspects of startups Provision of office space, shared facilities, and infrastructure to support the early-stage development of the business
Pre start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idea development Business modeling Problem/Solution fit: prototyping Team Formation: access to training and mentorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer entrepreneurs hip training and education Facilitate Proof of concept and proof of Business Facilitate Business Modeling Validate MVP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed funding for idea validation and product development Coaching to refine business ideas and plans Access to incubators or accelerators providing resources, infrastructure, and networking opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance in refining the product/service, pricing strategies, and go-to-market plans Support in conducting market research and understanding the target market, customer needs, and competitors

	Startup development stages	Government support	Funders support	SSOs support
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Creation • Early-stage fundraising • Initial Go-To market: MVP development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Early-Stage Financing • Facilitate access to client and Go-To -Market • Strategic partnerships • Housing • Operation set up and labeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed funding to launch the business • Cover initial operational costs • Access to angel investors or venture capital firms • Guidance on legal and regulatory compliance • Support in building a strong founding team and advisory board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on company registration, intellectual property protection, and legal compliance • Support in identifying funding sources, preparing investor pitches • Connecting with potential investors
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product/Market Fit • International Go-To-market • Expansion and scaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to Finance • Facilitate internationalization via events, strategic partnership, etc. • Provide operational support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series A, B, or C funding rounds for scaling operations and market expansion • Strategic guidance and industry insights from investors • Assistance in negotiating partnerships and strategic alliances • Exit strategies and assistance with mergers, acquisitions, or public offering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance in scaling operations, managing growth, and overcoming operational challenges • Access to industry experts • Provide sector-specific knowledge and guidance



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