

Startup Visa Business Plan: A Guide for Founders

A startup visa business plan is more than a document explaining an interesting idea. It must show how an international founder will turn an innovative concept into an operational company in the Netherlands within a limited period.

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GUIDE

Preparing Your Application for the Startup Visa

For the Dutch Startup Visa, the plan should connect innovation, market demand, execution, finances, and facilitator support. It should explain what the founder will do, when each step will happen, and why the Netherlands is the right environment for the business.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

"There are approximately 3.715 startups in the Netherlands. This creates partnership opportunities, but also raises the standard for explaining what makes a venture genuinely different."

Start with the official assessment criteria

- The One-Year Goal:**
The permit gives eligible entrepreneurs outside the EU/EEA one year to develop an innovative business with an experienced facilitator.
- Required Elements:**
The step-by-step plan must cover the organisation's structure, legal form, personnel, innovative product, and activities.
- Practical Detail:**
A polished pitch deck alone is not enough. The business plan must provide practical detail that an assessor can follow.

Source: [StartupBlink](#)

Explain why the business is innovative

Innovation should be demonstrated, not merely stated. Founders should explain what already exists, where current solutions fall short, and how their product, service, technology, or operating model introduces a meaningful difference.

TIP: PROVIDE RELEVANT EVIDENCE

The business may qualify as innovative when its product is new to the Netherlands, uses new technology, or introduces a new working method. Support this with prototype progress, customer feedback, and clear relevance to the Dutch market.

Turn the idea into a first-year action plan

The startup visa is designed around progress during the first year. The business plan should translate the concept into measurable activities rather than relying on long-term ambitions. Give each milestone an owner, deadline, expected result, and evidence of completion.

TIP: BE SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE

Divide your year into quarters. For example, Months 1-3 for validation, Months 4-6 for pilots, Months 7-9 for conversion, and Months 10-12 for commercial progress. "Generate 20 qualified customer conversations" is easier to assess than "begin marketing".

Support the market opportunity with evidence

Market size can provide context, but it should not replace customer evidence. A useful market section identifies a specific target group, the problem it is trying to solve, how customers respond, and why they may change their behaviour.

TIP: USE ACTIVE VALIDATION

Use interviews, pilot discussions, letters of intent, test results, or early sales. Explain why the company needs to be built in the Netherlands and connect local advantages to first-year activities.

Show that the founder has an active role

The founder must be more than a shareholder or financier. The plan should describe the founder's daily responsibilities, decision-making authority, relevant experience, and contribution to product development or commercial growth.

TIP: DEFINE FACILITATOR SUPPORT

Working with a trusted facilitator is mandatory. The plan should identify where guidance will make the greatest difference. Through The Unusual Space's Startup Visa Program, founders can align their application dossier and mentorship needs within one structured process.

Financial projections should explain how the company will operate, not simply present rapid revenue growth. Include expected income, development costs, professional fees, marketing expenses, staffing needs, and monthly cash requirements.

Make the plan easy to assess

A strong plan should clearly show what is innovative, who needs it, and what evidence will demonstrate progress.



Specific Market Claims

Keep the document specific and realistic. Every market claim should support an action and move the startup forward.



Clear Financials

Use conservative, base, and growth scenarios. Every financial figure should have an assumption, showing how long available cash can support the plan.



Operational Clarity

Address the legal form, KVK registration, business location, technology, suppliers, and workspace in your step-by-step plan.



Important: Facilitator Agreement is Mandatory

RVO's application guidance confirms that the facilitator, the innovative nature of the business, and the step-by-step plan all require a positive assessment. The cooperation must be recorded in a signed agreement.

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THE UNUSUAL SPACE

Navigate the Visa Process with Confidence

A successful Startup Visa application requires more than a great idea—it demands structure, validation, and the right partnerships.

- Translate concepts into measurable first-year milestones
- Connect with approved facilitators for mandatory support
- Establish a flexible professional base in the Netherlands

Ready to Apply for the Startup Visa?

At The Unusual Space, founders can align their application dossier, first-year milestones, and Dutch market entry plan within one structured environment.

Start your application: [Join US](#) →