

Kanagawa Startup Visa Program

(Kanagawa Prefectural Government Program for Promotion of Business Startups
by Foreign Entrepreneurs in National Strategic Special Zone)

Questions and Answers

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Questions and Answers

1. Eligible applicants and merits of the program

Q1. Who is eligible for the program?

A1. This program was approved exceptionally aiming to encourage foreign entrepreneurs to set up a business in the National Strategic Special Zone. In principle, foreign nationals who are entering Japan to launch a business in Kanagawa are eligible.

Q2. I already have another status of residence. I would like to change it to “Business Manager” to start a business. Am I eligible for the program?

A2. You are not, in principle. Your case falls under the regular procedures for changing the status of residence. It is recommended to ask the Immigration Services Bureau.

Q3. I currently live overseas. I am considering coming to Japan in the future. Am I eligible for this program?

A3. You can make an application. However, if you do not have a plan to come to Kanagawa (Japan) right after your status of residence for “Business Manager” is approved, your startup in Kanagawa might be considered insufficient in the examination of Business Plan at the time of application since this program is aimed at people who are starting up a business in Kanagawa Prefecture.

Q4. I currently live in Japan but not in Kanagawa. I plan to move to Kanagawa in the future. Am I eligible for this program?

A4. You can make an application. There is no restriction in applicant’s place of residence. However, your business office must be established in Kanagawa, and if you live in a place far from Kanagawa, which is not appropriate for making preparations for six months, your startup might be considered insufficient in the examination of Business Plan.

Q5. I currently live in Kanagawa and plan to move out in the near future. Am I eligible for this program?

A5. You can make an application. However, your business office must be established in Kanagawa, and if you plan to move out to a place far from Kanagawa, which is not appropriate for making preparations for six months, your startup might be considered insufficient in the examination of Business Plan.

Q6. I plan to live in Kanagawa and establish a business office outside Kanagawa in the near future. Am I eligible for the program?

A6. You are not eligible. This program is intended for people who are to engage in business startup, establish a business office and launch a business in Kanagawa.

Q7. What is the benefit of this program? What is the difference from the regular “Business

Manager”, which is approved by the Immigration Services Bureau?

A7. This program was approved as an exception of the regular status of residence of “Business Manager”. Usually, to receive the approval, a foreign entrepreneur should meet the requirements of opening a business office and hiring two or more full-time employees or investing/having capital of at least 5 million yen at the time of entry to Japan.

On the other hand, in this program, the applicant can gain approval for a six-month “Business Manager” residential status even before satisfying these conditions if Kanagawa Prefectural Government (hereafter referred to as K.P.G.) confirms that the applicant is likely to fulfill the above conditions and the startup is appropriate for strengthening of international competitiveness and forming of the base of business activity, and the business plan is appropriate and viable. The applicant can stay in Japan for six months and prepare a business in a speedy manner. In addition, those who have six months of status of residence will receive the residency card, which will make it smoother to conduct start-up preparations, such as concluding a rental agreement of business office.

In this program, the applicant should take two-steps of procedures: obtaining Confirmation from K.P.G. and applying to the Immigration Services Bureau with the “Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup” issued by K.P.G. and other documents. If you have already met the requirements for the regular “Business Manager”, it is recommended that you directly apply at Immigration Services Bureau. This program is useful for those who are planning to start a business in Kanagawa in the near future and can expect the preparations will be completed within six months.

Q8. I do not intend to establish a business myself (not involved in the business), but my family member/relative will start a business. Can I apply for the program?

A8. You cannot. This program is only for those who start a business as an operator or management executive. Even if the family member is to be employed, the member is not eligible to be an applicant. However, he/she may be eligible for another status of residence. We recommend that you consult with the Immigration Services Bureau.

Q9. I plan to take over a company currently run by my acquaintance. Am I eligible for the program?

A9. You are not. This program is intended for those who establish a new business, and not for those who will take over an existing business. However, you may be eligible for another status of residence. We recommend that you consult with the Immigration Services Bureau.

Q10. I will establish a business jointly with another person(s). How should I make an application?

A10. Each person must complete and submit his/her own application forms and documents since approval of status of residence is granted individually. When two or more persons jointly start a business, contents of “2. Business overview” to “4. Funding plan” will be the

same. Each applicant may submit the same documents in this case.

- Q11.** I will jointly establish a business. However, only I will be engaged in management and other person(s) will work as employee(s). How should I make an application?
- A11.** This program is for people who start a business as an operator or management executive. Even a founding member is not eligible if he/she is an employee. Whether he/she is involved in management or not depends on investment (ratio), roles played in the management, etc.

2. Application procedures

- Q12.** I would like to work in Japan to save up money necessary for startup staying in Kanagawa for six months on this program, while preparing the business. Is it possible?
- A12.** The six-month period of stay approved by this program is for setting up a business, and not for working (to engage in activity other than the permitted), in principle. In case funds for living expenses and business startup is not prepared beforehand, it will be difficult to obtain Confirmation of Business Startup.

- Q13.** Where can I obtain the application forms? Where should I submit them?

- A13.** You can download the application forms from the website of K.P.G.

URL (Japanese): <https://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/docs/sr4/startup-visa.html>

(English): <http://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/docs/sr4/startup-visa/startup-visa.html>

Please submit the application documents to the section below.

Industry Promotion Division, Industry Department

Industry and Labor Bureau, K.P.G.

1 Nihon-odori, Naka-ku, Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture, 231-8588

(2nd floor of K.P.G. Main Building, near Nihon-odori Station on the Minatomirai Line)

Open hours: 9:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 17:00, Mon. through Fri.

*Excluding the national holidays and days when K.P.G. is closed.

- Q14.** Do I need to consult before making a formal application?

- A14.** Consultation is required before formally submitting the application documents. K.P.G. will confirm the content of the business plan, present state of the applicant and whether all the necessary documents are prepared beforehand.

- Q15.** Do I need to visit K.P.G. for the consultation? Or can I have the consultation via phone or e-mail?

- A15.** You can have the consultation by e-mail.

Reception hours: 9:00 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 17:00, Mon. through Fri.

*Excluding the national holidays and days when K.P.G. is closed

Form to e-mail: Please send inquiries from the following URL.

<http://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/docs/sr4/startup-visa/startup-visa.html>

Q16. Do I need to visit K.P.G. to make an application? Can I submit the documents by post or e-mail?

A16. To formally make an application, please bring and submit the documents directly or sent by post.

Q17. Do I need to pay fees for making an application?

A17. No fee is required for making an application and obtaining Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup.

Q18. Can I go through the procedures by proxy?

A18. Documents of Application for Confirmation of Business Startup, Business Plan, etc. must be prepared by the applicant. The documents can be submitted by persons who fall under any of the below items.

- a. The applicant
- b. An employee of a public interest incorporated association or public interest incorporated foundation which is aimed to facilitate smooth acceptance of foreign nationals (currently, Japan Immigration Association), and who is recognized as appropriate by Regional Immigration Services Bureau Director.
- c. An attorney or administrative scrivener who has notified to Regional Immigration Services Bureau Director that has jurisdiction over the location of the bar association or administrative scrivener association, which the attorney or administrative scrivener belongs to, through the association. When the applicant is outside of Japan, this shall be a person who has been entrusted (its employee, in case of a corporation) by the applicant with the opening of the office in Japan.

*When the documents are submitted by a person described in b. or c., the person is requested to also bring documents to show his/her relationship with the applicant and explain that he/she is in the said position.

Q19. How long does it take to receive a reply from K.P.G. after making an application?

A19. If all the necessary documents are complete, an official in charge and a person who has insights into business management will confirm (examine) the content of business startup at the time of application. K.P.G. may be able to reply in two weeks following the confirmation (examination).

However, it may take longer if it is necessary to make any additions or submit additional certificates, etc. as a result of confirmation, or when there are many applications.

In order to obtain approval for the status of residence for Business Manager, you need to go through further procedures at Yokohama District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, after issuance of Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup by K.P.G. Please contact the Immigration Services Bureau for the time required for the procedures.

- Q20.** If I obtain Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup from K.P.G., can I obtain the status of residence for Business Manager for sure?
- A20.** The Certificate issued by K.P.G. will be an important information for examination by the Immigration Services Bureau. However, it doesn't guarantee the approval for the status of residence.
- Q21.** What points will be examined in Confirmation of Business Startup? Is there any case that I cannot receive the Certificate as a result of the confirmation?
- A21.** K.P.G. will examine the business plan to see if the applicant has high probability of obtaining approval for the full status of residence for Business Manager after the six-month preparation period. Therefore, the applicant is required to enter the following points in clearly understandable terms in Business Plan and the documents to be attached.
- If K.P.G. considers that the applicant is not likely to fulfill the requirements based on the submitted documents, it will not issue the Certificate.

- What kind of business is planned. (Business overview, Appended Form No. 1-2)
- Where to set up the office. (Location to set up the business, Appended Form No. 1-2)
- Who will be the corporation's board members and what kind of roles they will play (in case of setting up a corporation). (Board members, Appended Form No. 1-2)
- How much fund will be necessary for starting the business. How the fund will be raised. (Fund plan at the start of the business, Appended Form No. 1-2 or -3)
- Where to run the business. (Area to run the business, Appended Form No. 1-3)
- What process the applicant will go through before starting the business. (Time schedule, Appended Form No. 1-3)

- Q22.** Can I make changes to the address (or point of contact) or content of the business after submitting the application documents? If I can, what procedures should I take?
- A22.** If you make changes to the address or point of contact, please immediately contact the Industry Promotion Division, K.P.G., and submit Notification of Change (Form No. 1-6) and documents that show the changes. Regarding the changes to the business content, please explain at the time of interviews with K.P.G. to be conducted to confirm the state of progress.
- Q23.** How will I be notified of the result? Where can I receive Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup? If the Certificate is not issued, will you let me know the reason?
- A23.** When K.P.G. considers that the submitted application documents are appropriate, it will issue Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup. K.P.G. will contact the address entered in the application form for notification. Please come to the office below to receive the Certificate of Confirmation, also we can send it by post.
- When the Certificate is not issued, K.P.G. will send Notification on the Result of

Confirmation of Business Startup by post to inform the result. The reason for not issuing the Certificate will not be disclosed.

Q24. Does the Certificate have an effective period?

A24. The effective period is three months. The applicant needs to submit the Certificate to Yokohama District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, within three months with other necessary documents to apply for issuance of Certificate of Eligibility for Status of Residence.

3. Filling out Business Plan, etc.

Q25. When I have questions about how to fill out the forms, where can I ask?

A25. Industry Promotion Division, K.P.G. will answer the questions, in Japanese, in principle. Please make an appointment by phone or e-mail before coming to K.P.G.

Q26. If I need more space to enter, what should I do?

A26. You can add space in the downloaded forms in a way you like.

Q27. May I fill out the forms in my native language? If the document (original) to be attached is not in Japanese, do I need to prepare a Japanese translation?

A27. You are required to fill out all the application forms in Japanese. Please write your name either in the Roman alphabet, Chinese character, hiragana or katakana. If the document to be attached is in a language other than Japanese, please attach a Japanese translation.

Q28. I haven't worked out the entire plan of the business. May I leave some spaces blank if I don't have anything to enter?

A28. Please enter a feasible business plan based on a certain level of supporting data. Do not enter a plan of no or low feasibility. You can leave the space blank if you are not sure what to enter. However, K.P.G. will evaluate the probability based on the content entered in Business Plan. So, if you have to leave many spaces blank, you are advised to take more time to draw up a plan that you can think highly feasible before making an application.

Q29. I am presently staying at a hotel temporarily. What should I enter in the space of address?

A29. You are required to enter the address that K.G.P. can make contact when Certificate of Confirmation of Business Startup is issued and also during the six-month period of stay that follows. If you stay at a hotel when making an application, you can enter the address and room number of the hotel. When you change the address, please immediately contact Industry Promotion Division, K.P.G.

Q30. What should I enter in "(2) Position and role of the applicant in the business" of "1.

Outline of the applicant”?

- A30.** If you are going to start a business by yourself (in case of a wholly owned company), the applicant’s position will be the representative director, and role will be overall business management or control of the entire project as a representative.
If you start a business with other foreign or Japanese partners, please enter your specific role in the business, for instance, “vice-president of sales with responsibility for sales activities in the AA area”, “board director that controls planning, development and production of BB project” or “CFO in charge of fund raising, financial management and corporate planning”.
- Q31.** What should I enter in “(3) Qualifications, career record, special skills and patents owned by the applicant that backs up the business startup” of “1. Outline of the applicant”? If there isn’t anything particular to enter, may I leave the space blank?
- A31.** In examining the business plan, K.P.G. will see if the applicant would be able to start a business on a scale that meets the requirements after preparations. So, if the applicant has qualifications, experiences, skills, etc. that will be beneficial to the planned business, K.P.G. may consider that the applicant has high probability. Besides national qualifications, experiences, such as “I majored in AA at BB university, and conducted research on CC”, or “I worked for DD, one of the largest companies in the field of XX, and developed sales channel for YY in ZZ” are considered beneficial. Especially, information related to the business fields eligible for this program are important.
- Q32.** I plan to start a business without establishing a corporation. What should I enter in “a. Planned date to start the business”, and “b. Total amount of capital and investment (or personal fund)” of “(5) Plan for business startup, 1. Outline of the applicant”?
- A32.** In general, in case of a corporation, date of registration as corporation is the “Planned date to start the business”. If you start a business as an individual business operator without establishing a corporation, date to submit Notice of Commencement of Business, etc. to a tax office is the planned date to start the business. The date to book the sales for the first time may also be considered as opening day of the business. Any of the above is acceptable, but please clearly write which one is selected.
Regarding the total amount of capital and investment (or personal fund), please enter the amount of fund specially prepared for starting the business as personal fund, instead of capital, in case of an individual business operator.
- Q33.** I don’t know if my business falls under the eligible business fields of this program. What kind of business fits “the business specially recognized by Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture”?
- A33.** The eligible businesses for this program are limited to the ones that would contribute to strengthening of international competitiveness and development of international hubs for Kanagawa industries. The businesses and fields below are designated by K.P.G. as the eligible ones. Other businesses are not eligible for the program, in principle.

- a. ME-BYO*/life sciences business (e.g. biotechnology, medical device)
- b. Energy business (e.g. energy creation, saving and storage)
- c. IT/robotics business (e.g. software, AI, IoT, ICT)
- d. Tourism business (e.g. promotion of inbound tourists, creation of tourist attractions)
- e. Other businesses specially recognized by Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture as having the potential to contribute to developing international competitiveness and international business hubs for Kanagawa industries.

If you can't figure out which category of eligible businesses your business falls under, please consult with Industry Promotion Division, K.P.G. When you would like to know whether your business will be approved as the one specially recognized by Governor of Kanagawa, please also consult with K.P.G.

Q34. Since I am not versed in the economic state of Japan, I have no specific idea about what to enter in “(2) Sale destinations, sales methods and unit selling price”, and “(3) Cost rate and breakdown of cost price” of “2. Business overview”. What should I enter?

A34. When you start a new business, you will need a large amount of money and labor, and there could be no small risk of failure. It is advised that you will have more experience and knowledge of the desired business and develop a solid and practical idea before making an application.

Q35. I plan to start a non-profit business (e.g. social contribution business). As for “(5) Reason why the business can make profit, and reason why the business can achieve differentiation from other competing companies in the market of Kanagawa Prefecture” of “2. Business overview”, may I leave the space blank?

A35. Even a non-profit business has a possibility to be eligible for this program if it contributes to strengthening of international competitiveness and development of international hubs for Kanagawa industries. However, if the business is considered unlikely to generate profit to maintain a certain scale of business, it would be difficult to obtain Confirmation of Business Startup.

If you are planning a non-profit business, please consult with the Immigration Services Bureau beforehand about eligibility, including the possibility of obtaining a different status of residence.

Q36. I don't know how much the sales or cost will be. What should I enter in “3. Profit plan”? What items should I enter as the breakdown of the sales and cost?

A36. It is not easy to estimate future sales and cost. However, these are indispensable information in evaluating the sustainability of the business and confirm the points listed in A21. So, please enter the amounts estimated from the nature of the planned business and expected clients (e.g. average unit price and number of clients) based on a certain level of supporting data.

Regarding the breakdown of the sales and cost, please enter major items (e.g. items of large amount of money or items showing the business characteristics). Rest of them can be put together as “Others”.

In general, breakdown of sales will be listed by the type of product, service or sale destination. Cost of sales usually includes the cost of materials, outsourcing, labor (expenses of production personnel), and selling and general administration cost includes cost of personnel (indirect section), rent, cost of leasing, cost related to sales (cost of advertisement, communications, travelling, shipping, etc.). Post-tax current profit and loss is calculated by subtracting interest expense, extraordinary loss, corporation tax, etc. from operating income. Post-tax profit corresponds to “Current profit” of “5. Financial plan”.

Q37. What the difference between “3. Profit plan” and “4. Financial plan at the start of the business”?

A37. In general, financial plan shows how to raise and manage the fund necessary for the business. Profit plan shows the amount of profit or loss by subtracting cost from sales. Especially in the space of “4. Financial plan at the start of the business”, please write the amount of fund which will be necessary in starting the business and how to raise and return it. The information will be taken into account when K.P.G. examines whether the applicant is likely to start a business on a scale that fulfills the requirements for the status of residence, and ensure profit and fund that can sustain the business. In the space of “Necessary fund”, please write equipment fund, such as deposit for renting a shop, expenses of interior decoration construction, expenses of machine equipment and apparatus, as well as operating fund, such as expenses of necessary supplies and overhead cost. The total amount of the necessary fund must be equivalent to that of the raised fund.

Q38. What should I enter in “Time schedule” of “4. Financial plan at the start of the business”? If there are any points that I should note, please let me know.

A38. In “Time schedule”, enter what you have to prepare to start the business in an organized way. For instance, please write the specific procedures to establish a corporation (e.g. preparation of the articles of incorporation, payment of capital, registration of incorporation, and obtaining permission/approval of the business), employment of the management executives and staff, preparation of products and services, building relations with sales destinations and clients, and fund raising. When writing, please note the points for Confirmation of Business Startup listed in A21., and make it easy-to-understand. Especially concerning the necessary expenses, please write realistic information, such as the amount of the necessary fund and when it will be necessary, and how to raise the fund.

Q39. I plan to open the business immediately after entering into Japan. Do I still need to write the plan for six months in “Time schedule”?

A39. You still need to enter the schedule for six months. In the space of “Schedule after opening the business”, please write your plan on business development (sales activity, production activity, etc.), sales, fund raising, etc.

4. Documents to be attached

Q40. What exactly is the “document which clarifies where the applicant will be residing for six months after entry into Japan” (Attachment 1, Form No. 1)?

A40. For instance, the following documents can be submitted.

In the case of staying at rental residence: Residential lease agreement or residential rent application form

In the case of staying at accommodation for long stayers (e.g. apartment rented by the week): A document to certify the booking

In the case of staying at an acquaintance’s house: A document to certify the stay made by the acquaintance and document to certify that the acquaintance resides there (e.g. photocopy of residential lease agreement if the acquaintance resides in rental housing)

If the applicant is to stay at residence that requires rent, please also attach a document to certify that the applicant is able to pay the rent for six months or longer, such as certificate of deposit balance.

Q41. In filling out Resume of the Applicant (Appended Form No. 1-4), which school should I start with? When there are too many academic and work records, what should I enter?

A41. It depends on the applicant’s decision. Please enter everything that should be taken into account in evaluating the probability of the business/business startup.

For instance, your major and theme of research at school, past work experience and achievements are the ones to be entered. If you need more space, please add as you like.

Q42. What exactly are “Other reference documents” (Attachment 7, Form No. 1)?

A42. Please attach a document to certify that the applicant has enough living fund during business startup (photocopy of the applicant’s bankbook). If the applicant is to use his/her personal fund as business fund, please also attach a document to certify that the business fund is secured (photocopy of the applicant’s bankbook).

If there are any documents that would be advantageous in the examination for Confirmation of Business Startup, please attach them. Pamphlets of the business (company) to start, explanatory leaflet of the products (services), contract with the (potential) clients, documents to certify the background and achievements of the applicants, and documents to certify the business fund (living fund) is secured would be considered as useful.

5. Others

Q43. What will be asked in the interviews to confirm the progress to be conducted during six months in the program?

A43. During the six-month period of stay, we will have interviews at least once per two months. In principle, a K.P.G. official in charge and an expert on business management, who is commissioned by K.P.G., will visit the office or residence of the applicant and have an interview about the progress of the business startup. They will compare the plan entered in Business Plan and actual activity, and if there is difference between them, they will ask the reason. They may also confirm the state of financing. Interviews are conducted based on Written Oath (6) to be submitted as Attachment 4 of Application Form for Business Startup.

Q44. What procedures will be necessary when the six-month period of stay expires?

A44. In order to continue staying in Japan after the six-month period of stay in this program and doing business, you are required to take procedures for extending the period of stay at Yokohama District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau. If it becomes difficult to continue business startup during the period given by this program, or you cannot obtain approval for renewal of the status of residence for Business Manager, you must return to your home country. So, you are advised to set aside the expenses to return home from the business and living funds (expenses for one-way air ticket to home country).