

# Business Plan

STARTERS ACADEMY 2024



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## 1. Executive Summary

Gateway Portugal is set to revolutionize the accessibility of visas for international university students by providing easily accessible information, up-to-date immigration regulations, and direct access to immigration lawyers through our innovative and reliable website. With a growing interest in international students moving to Portugal, our unique approach addresses the demand for clear visa procedures and requirements, which can often be complex.

Research indicates a significant gap in the market for reliable, uncomplicated, and tailored websites and platforms for international university students, positioning GatewayUPortugal at a distinct advantage. Projected financials suggest steady revenue growth, with the potential for rapid expansion within the first three years, including the possibility of diversifying into other areas of immigration advocacy.

Our experienced team comprises individuals with expertise in language, technology, administration, and marketing, all of whom are passionate about promoting equal opportunities within communities. Having experienced the challenges of immigrating to Portugal firsthand, our team is driven to provide the best solutions and support to international students.

In summary, GatewayUPortugal is well-positioned to disrupt the landscape of immigration services by providing a user-friendly platform with reliable, firsthand information.

## 2. Idea Description

- Problem Identification:

International university students often struggle with navigating Portugal's visa application process due to its complexity and lack of accessible information. Existing platforms lack personalization and direct access to qualified immigration lawyers, leaving students feeling overwhelmed and unsupported.

- **Solution and Differential Advantage:**

GatewayUPortugal offers a comprehensive solution by providing easily accessible information, up-to-date immigration regulations, and direct access to immigration lawyers through our innovative website. We offer targeted marketing for lawyers, enhanced visibility, and a user-friendly interface available in both English and Portuguese.

Additionally, the immigration lawyers can effortlessly access all the information provided by students, eliminating the need for lengthy email exchanges. With our innovative feature, student details and requirements are stored in one centralized location on our platform, ensuring lawyers have real-time access to everything they need to provide accurate quotes. This streamlined process not only saves time but also enhances the overall user experience for both students and lawyers, setting us apart as a platform that prioritizes efficiency and convenience.

- **Idea Development Stage:**

GatewayUPortugal is currently in the pre-launch phase, finalizing partnerships and refining our platform's functionality.

- **Protection of the Idea:**

We have a legal memorandum in place outlining our intellectual property strategy for the project, ensuring that our idea is protected.

- **Prototype:**

[GatewayUPortugal](#)

### **3. Marketing Strategy**

#### **Vision:**

Our vision is to become the leading platform for international students seeking visa assistance and immigration services in Portugal. We aim to simplify the visa application process, empower students with accurate information, and facilitate direct access to qualified immigration lawyers, ultimately enabling students to pursue their academic and professional aspirations with confidence.

#### **SWOT Analysis:**

##### **Strengths:**

- Strong partnerships with universities and law firms across Portugal.
- User-friendly interface available in both English and Portuguese
- Directly focused on the student's pain points.

##### **Weaknesses:**

- Limited brand awareness and market penetration in the initial stages.
- Reliance on partnerships for visibility and user acquisition.

##### **Opportunities:**

- Growing demand for immigration services among international students.
- Expansion into other areas of immigration advocacy and support services.

Threats:

- Competition from existing platforms and traditional immigration service providers.
- Regulatory changes impacting visa requirements and immigration policies.

### **Go-to Market strategy:**

Launch Phase:

- Establish partnerships with universities.
- Offer free or low-cost access for immigration lawyers to encourage participation in the platform.
- Develop and test the platform, ensuring functionality and user experience.
- Conduct targeted marketing campaigns to generate buzz and attract initial users.

After Launch:

Initial Rollout:

- Focus on acquiring the first 30 lawyers on the platform and reaching the most students as possible.
- Gather feedback from early users to refine the platform and messaging.

Expansion Phase:

- Expand partnerships with additional universities and law firms.
- Explore opportunities to diversify into related services, such as relocation assistance or language support/courses. (Possibility of partnership with housing apps/services).
- Focus on assisting students with their permanent transition to the country.

## **4. Market Analysis and Dimension**

### **Proof of Market Existence**

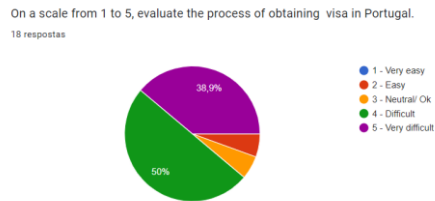
The market for immigration services for international students in Portugal is both significant and growing. The number of international students in Portugal has increased steadily over the past decade, with thousands of students enrolling in Portuguese universities each year.

In 2023 there were 56,775 international students who chose Portugal to acquire their full degree, an increase of 14 % from 2022. In just 1 year there was an increase of 14% and it is expected to increase even more ([Source](#)).

Broken down by country, the most international students come from: Brazil (17,028 students), followed by Guinea-Bissau (6,910 students), Cape Verde (6,449 students), Angola (5,292 students) and France (3,406 students).

Our preliminary surveys and interviews with prospective students reveal a consistent demand for simplified visa processes and reliable legal assistance. Specifically:

- From the 18 international students that we interviewed, 16 of them described the process of obtaining VISA as 'Difficult' or 'Very Difficult' ([GatewayUPortugal Survey](#))



- 39% of our respondents had no one helping them in the process. 27.8% had help of lawyers/professionals. However, from the latter, 50% of them reported that they end up spending more money than expected.

## Market Size

Number of lawyers in Portugal: According to the Direção-Geral da Política de Justiça (DGPJ), in 2022 there were 38,804 lawyers (1000 more than the previous year), a new record ([source](#)).

Number of Immigration Lawyers in Portugal: Given the lack of specific data, it's difficult to provide a precise estimate of the number of immigration lawyers in Portugal. However, according to the [Portuguese Bar Association](#), we could say that there are approximately 1,000 lawyers specializing in immigration law in Portugal.

Revenue Potential: Assuming an average subscription fee of €1,000 per lawyer per year to be listed on our platform, the potential market size can be estimated at €1 million annually.

## Identification and Analysis of Competition

- Legal Directories: Websites that list lawyers across various specialties, including immigration law.

Strengths: Wide reach and established presence.

Weaknesses: Lack of focus on the specific needs of international students and immigration law.

Examples: [Avvo](#), [Lawzana](#)

- General Immigration Service Platforms: Platforms that provide information and services related to immigration but do not specialize in connecting students with lawyers.

Strengths: Broad range of services.

Weaknesses: Lack of personalized legal assistance and marketplace functionality.

Example: [VisaHQ](#), [Expatica](#)

- Independent Lawyer Websites: Individual websites for law firms or solo practitioners specializing in immigration.

Strengths: Personalized and specific services.

Weaknesses: Limited visibility and reach compared to a centralized platform.

Example: [Edge International Lawyers](#)

Competitive Advantage of GatewayUPortugal:

GatewayUPortugal differentiates itself by creating a specialized marketplace that directly connects international students with immigration lawyers. Our platform offers:

- **Targeted Marketing:** A platform specifically designed for immigration lawyers seeking to connect with international students.
- **Enhanced Visibility:** Increased exposure for lawyers through a centralized and trusted platform.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** An easy-to-navigate website that caters to the needs of both students and lawyers. The website can be read both in English and Portuguese. This bilingual approach ensures accessibility and inclusivity, particularly for CPLP students, enhancing their experience and facilitating their journey through the immigration process.

## **5. Business Model**

### **Value Proposition:**

GatewayUPortugal offers value to both international students and immigration lawyers. For students, we provide easy access to accurate visa information, up-to-date immigration regulations, and direct connections with qualified lawyers, streamlining the often complex visa application process. For immigration lawyers, we offer a platform to showcase their expertise, access a targeted audience of international students, and streamline client acquisition through centralized communication and quotation processes.

### **Customer Relations, Partners, and Distribution Channels:**

Our customer relations strategy focuses on building trust and providing ongoing support to both students and immigration lawyers. We maintain strong partnerships with universities and law firms across Portugal. Our distribution channels include digital marketing, partnerships with educational institutions, and strategic collaborations with relevant organizations to promote our platform.

### **Costs and Sources of Revenue:**

The primary costs associated with our business model include platform development and maintenance, marketing and promotional expenses, and operational costs.

Our main revenue source consists of subscription fees paid by immigration lawyers to be featured on the platform. Additionally, we will also have revenue through advertising revenue and premium features (the lawyers with premium accessibility would get enhanced visibility and priority placement in search results). In the future, there may be revenue streams from auxiliary services such as relocation assistance or language support.

## 6. The Team

**João Capitão**, CEO & Data Scientist: Pursuing a Bachelor's in Data Science at NOVA Information Management School and active in Junior Data Consulting. He brings strong analytical and project management skills. Passionate about solving challenges, João leads GatewayUPortugal with a focus on innovative, data-driven solutions.

**Francisco Fogaça**, CFO & Management Specialist: Currently pursuing a degree in Management at NOVA SBE, Francisco brings solid expertise in financial planning and organizational management. His academic background and dedication make him well-suited to oversee the financial and operational aspects of GatewayUPortugal.

**Tausif Ahmad**, Marketing Specialist & Customer Support Representative: Currently pursuing a Master's in Data Driven Marketing at NOVA Information Management School, Tausif has valuable experience as a Customer Support Representative at T.N Training. He brings a unique blend of customer service expertise, marketing knowledge, and analytical skills to GatewayUPortugal, ensuring a seamless and supportive user experience.

**Lara Menezes**, Communication Specialist: Lara holds a Bachelor's in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at NOVA FCSH, complemented by an Apprenticeship in Digital Marketing. She brings a strong foundation in communication and digital marketing skills to GatewayUPortugal, enhancing our outreach and engagement strategies.

While our team successfully covers crucial areas such as leadership, financial management, marketing, communication, and customer support, we recognize the need to address certain gaps, particularly in legal and technical expertise. Therefore, we will need to hire:

- **Legal Advisor/Lawyer:** An experienced legal professional specializing in immigration law. This person will ensure compliance with immigration regulations and provide expert guidance on legal matters related to visa applications.
- **Full-Stack Developer:** Responsible for both frontend and backend development, this individual will develop a user-friendly interface, manage server-side logic, and ensure overall functionality and seamless performance of the platform.

## 7. Project Implementation

### Implementation Strategy

Our implementation strategy focuses on executing the development of the GatewayUPortugal platform in a phased approach. The strategy involves establishing partnerships with local universities and law firms, developing the website infrastructure, content creation, and conducting a trial period to ensure functionality and user satisfaction. Additionally, we will prioritize hiring key team members to fill critical roles in legal advisory and technical development, to support the platform's successful launch.

## Planning - Chronogram:

- **Pre-Launch Phase (Month 1-2):**
  - Finalize partnerships with universities and law firms.
  - Develop website infrastructure and backend systems.
  - Curate content for visa guides and educational resources.
  - Begin recruitment process for the key team members.
- **Trial Period (Month 3):**
  - Invite lawyers to join the platform for free or at a low cost to attract initial participation.
  - Conduct trial run of the platform with some users.
  - Gather feedback and make necessary adjustments.
  - Evaluate the performance and engagement of lawyers on the platform.
- **Initial Launch (Month 4):**
  - Official launch of GatewayUPortugal platform.
  - Marketing and promotion to attract initial users.
  - Full deployment of website features and services.
  - Finalize partnerships.

## Milestones:

- Partnership Agreements Signed (End of Month 1)  
Establish partnerships with at least 3 universities and 5 law firms.
- Website Development Completed (End of Month 2)  
Complete development of website infrastructure and backend systems.
- Content Curation Finished (End of Month 2)  
Curate and finalize visa guides and educational resources for the platform.
- Trial Period Commences (Start of Month 3)  
Launch trial run of the platform with selected users.
- Official Platform Launch (Start of Month 4)  
Officially launch GatewayUPortugal platform to the public.

## 8. Financial Analysis

GatewayUPortugal will require some initial investment to cover startup costs and operational expenses.

Costs:

- Website and Web App Development: Investment is required for developing a robust and user-friendly platform that connects to a database, including frontend and backend development. (1 000€/month)

- **Research and Development (R&D):** R&D will be critical throughout our lifecycle. We will need a big push to get our platform ready for launch, as a MVP that demonstrates the core value proposition and features. As we get customer feedback, we'll need to continue evolving the platform to meet increasing needs and market demands, achieving product-market fit, and staying ahead of competitors. (500€/month)
- **Legal Advisory Services:** Costs associated with consulting immigration lawyers for accurate and reliable information, ensuring compliance with regulations. (250€/month)
- **Marketing Efforts:** Expenses for marketing campaigns to attract users and immigration lawyers to the platform, including digital advertising, social media promotion, and content marketing. (500€/month)
- **Personnel and Working Capital:** Salaries for key team members and funds to cover day-to-day operational expenses. (6000€/month)

Note:

We prioritize competitive salaries for our team upfront, aiming to sustain them without immediate fundraising. However, as we grow, we foresee potential fundraising to further support and enhance our team's compensation. We'll explore various avenues such as venture capital, angel investors, crowdfunding, and strategic partnerships to secure resources aligned with our mission of simplifying immigration for international students while ensuring financial sustainability and growth.

- **Telecommunications:** Expenses for necessary communication tools, including phone services and internet to ensure seamless operations and customer support. (100€/month)
- **Equipment:** Costs for purchasing necessary equipment such as computers and software licenses. (5 000€ total)

#### Revenue Streams:

- **Lawyer Subscriptions:** Revenue generated from subscription fees paid by immigration lawyers to be listed on the platform and access client leads. (4 000-8 000€)
- **Advertising Revenue:** Income from advertising placements on the website. These ads could be from various businesses and services relevant to international students and immigrants, such as language schools, relocation services, housing, travel agencies, insurance companies, and telecommunications providers. (2 000-4 000€)
- **Premium Features:** Additional revenue may be generated through premium features or services offered to users or lawyers, providing enhanced visibility or access to specialized resources. (800-2500€)

Note1: We may expand our revenue streams as the business grows.

Note The revenue projections are subject to the project's stage, with potential for increased earnings over time; however, the provided ranges offer estimations for each revenue stream.