

Mission Accomplished: Startup Visa Canada is Here

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Mircea Pașoi and Cristian Strat, founders of Summify

Two years ago, Danny Robinson, Maura Rodgers and myself started to lobby for a Startup Visa Canada that would make it easier for foreign (tech) entrepreneurs to start their company in Canada. The initiative was inspired by the immigration struggles of the talented Summify team.

In 2010, Cristian and Mircea arrived in Vancouver from Romania to start a new company. This talented pair had a big idea, strong endorsements, and venture-capital backing from top tier investors like Accel. However, rather than focusing on their startup, they faced a frustrating collection of bureaucratic red tape and immigration status uncertainty. We were hardly extending a friendly invitation to these talented entrepreneurs.

So I was extremely pleased about the opportunity to attend the public launch of Startup Visa Canada in Toronto by Minister Jason Kenney today. The general idea behind Startup Visa is that foreign entrepreneurs get fast-tracked for immigration if they have an investment commitment from a Canadian venture capital firm or angel investor. This program is sure to raise Canada's profile within the global technology community, sending a signal to the best and brightest that we're open for business. In addition, Startup Visa will create good Canadian jobs.

This success was only possible because of the support of many people – from the whole Startup Visa Canada team to countless individuals and organizations including the CVCA, who is an official partner in the new government initiative.

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Startup ecosystems are competing globally for the best and brightest people – I am excited that the Canadian ecosystems are now in a much better position to attract the next generation of tech entrepreneurs to this country.