

Race amongst countries to attract the investor immigrants

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- Ajay Sharma -

Over the years, investor immigration programs have become extremely popular amongst businessmen and high net worth investors who are seeking an alternate residency or second passport for assorted reasons.



Canada (Quebec) Immigrant Investor program was amongst the very first of such initiatives and continues to be the most popular amongst eligible applicants. It is amongst the oldest immigrant investor program in the world. Most of the EU countries started offering these plans after the 2008 crisis. Investments (in almost all cases) to get residency or citizenship came interest free, only requirement being refund after 5-6 years, depending on scheme parameters. This was normally through the investment in government funds and/or schemes. Most also offer options for investments in property. This serves many purposes – generates employment, grows economy because of movement through sale of all construction and use of linked equipment and material and overall makes finances flow through the economy.

While many Caribbean countries, especially St. Kitts and Navis have had investment based passport programs for few years now, they slashed down the investment amounts after last years cyclones that caused huge infrastructural and financial damage in these countries. They used the programs to get the much required funding to rebuild their countries.

Much talked about EB- Green card program has been in operation since 1990 but got famous only after the financial meltdown of 2008. No American banks were lending money to crashed property segment and they started collecting funds through an interest free investment vehicle called EB-5 !!

Political upheavals, uncertainty and rise of fundamentalism and autocracies across the world also created demand for these investor immigrant products. Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran. Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan – the list is long.

In Indian context, the overall media interest hype -- on account of aggressive marketing budgets of the regional centers and consultant's --indicating that Indian's are applying for these programs in hoards in misplaced and misleading. Few hundreds do not make it a flood in a country of the size of India.

Unlike other countries, Indians mostly opt for these programs for betterment of quality of life and future of their children. Corruption, difficulty in doing business, pollution and kids education and lower or negligible taxation rates continue to be the main motivators.


More and more countries are realizing the opportunities it brings and cheap funds it generates for their government. Various countries across the globe have formulated attractive programs to attract the investor immigrants. List is long – Canada, USA, Singapore, UK, Bulgaria, Malta, Ireland, Greece, Portugal,

Spain, Baltic's and Caribbean Countries.

Applicants make their destination choice depending on careful assessment of many factors such as

- Personal net worth
- Investment budgets
- Application processing time frames
- Timeline to getting passports
- Physical residency requirements to retain the residency status
- Immigration destination
- Number of countries for which Visa free travel convenience is permitted by the passport
- Higher educational facilities for children
- Business and personal taxation rates
- Ease of doing business
- Weather, especially preference for less polluted destinations
- Social security benefits
- Permission for elderly or non-dependent children to accompany the principal applicant.

Though at many times it has received its share of flak as well, investor immigrant programs still remain a very popular option and countries globally are now in a virtual race to attract the investor migrants.

 About the author

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Author and Entrepreneur

Ajay Sharma is one of the pioneers of Immigration consulting in India, having founded the company in 1994. Since then, he has been a part of thousands of immigration and visa application filings for various countries. Over the years, he has gained a deep insight into the various laws and procedures regarding Immigration. More so, he has an excellent understanding of its practical approach.

His excellent knowledge skills that he has gained from past precedents on application processing under various circumstances are another key factor of the company's success. Since, Immigration refers to law, nothing can beat experience!

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