PROGRAMME BROCHURE

RESIDENCY BY INVESTMENT | FRANCE

France Talent Card — Innovative Economic Project

No investment floor at all — but the project must be recognised as innovative by the ministry responsible for the economy. This is the route the French Tech ecosystem runs on.

FAMILY

Spouse, children up to age 18

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At a glance

COUNTRY	ROUTE
France	**Residency by Investment - Innovation / Startup**
FAMILY MEMBERS	LAST UPDATED
Spouse, children up to age 18	**1 October 2026**

Overview

The **innovative economic project** talent card is the French startup route. Unlike almost every other European option marketed to founders, it specifies **no minimum investment**. What it asks instead is that the project be **recognised as innovative by the ministry responsible for the economy**, and that you can support yourself at around **€22,404.20** a year while you build it.

The card runs up to four years, carries the right to work, and brings a spouse and minor children in on talent-famille cards.

The gate is recognition, not money

This is the point most applicants get wrong. Having capital does not help here, and lacking it does not hurt. The decision rests on whether the ministry accepts the project as innovative — which turns on novelty, the strength of the team, and whether the venture adds something the French market does not already have.

That has two consequences worth planning around. First, the preparation effort goes into the project case rather than into proving funds. Second, the timeline is set by an assessment you do not control, so it is less predictable than a route with a cash threshold.

The salaried alternative

If you would join an innovative French company rather than found one, a separate talent route covers exactly that: employment by a **jeune entreprise innovante** or a company recognised as innovative by the economy ministry, at gross annual pay of **at least €39,582**. With an offer in hand this is the faster path by a wide margin, and it reaches the same multi-year talent card.

Key benefits

- No minimum investment — the project carries the application, not your bank balance.
- Multi-year talent card, up to four years and renewable.
- Spouse and minor children receive a talent-famille card without family reunification.
- Access to French incubators, public innovation funding and the wider EU market.
- Counts towards the five years of residence required for naturalisation.

Requirements

- Non-EU, non-EEA and non-Swiss nationality.
- An economic project recognised as innovative by the ministry responsible for the economy.
- Personal resources at least equal to the annual gross SMIC (€22,404.20).
- Valid passport, clean criminal record and health cover.

When this route may not fit

- A project that does not obtain ministry recognition — without it this route does not open, at any level of funding.
- A conventional business dressed as an innovative one; the assessment looks for genuine novelty.
- Insufficient personal means to live on while the venture develops.

Costs and government fees

Programme costs

Item	Amount	Notes
Residence card tax	EUR 300	At issuance. Payable at the prefecture.
Stamp duty	EUR 50	At issuance. Droit de timbre.

Funds to show

Requirement	Amount	Notes
Personal resources	EUR 22,404	Means at least equal to the annual gross SMIC, stated as €22,404.20.

How the process works

1. **Assess the innovation case**
   Establish honestly whether the project reads as innovative to a ministry assessor, not only to its founders.
2. **Seek ministry recognition**
   Submit the project for recognition by the ministry responsible for the economy. This is the real gate and it takes time.
3. **Apply for the long-stay visa**
   With recognition in hand, file at the French consulate covering your place of residence.
4. **Prefecture appointment**
   Give biometrics, pay the tax and stamp duty, collect the talent card.

5 **Add the family**
Spouse and minor children apply for talent-famille cards.

6 **Build and renew**
Develop the venture and renew the card before expiry.

Document checklist

Identity

- Valid passport and certified copy
- Passport photographs to French specification
- Civil status documents

The project

- Evidence of recognition by the ministry responsible for the economy
- Technical and commercial description of the innovation
- Team credentials and any intellectual property

Means and compliance

- Evidence of personal resources at SMIC level
- Criminal record certificate
- Health insurance covering the stay

Questions clients ask

Is there really no minimum investment?

For this route, no minimum investment is specified. What replaces it is recognition of the project by the ministry responsible for the economy. That is a harder gate than a bank balance for most applicants, and an easier one for a genuinely novel venture with a strong team.

What makes a project innovative in French terms?

Recognition is assessed by the economy ministry rather than by a published checklist, which is why preparation matters. In practice, assessors look for genuine technical or commercial novelty, a credible team, and a business that could not simply be replicated by an existing French company.

How is this different from the business creation route?

Business creation asks for €30,000 of financing and a viable plan, with no external approval. This route asks for no money at all but requires ministry recognition. A trading business should take the first; a technology venture should usually take this one.

Can I join an innovative company as an employee instead?

Yes — a separate talent route covers salaried employment by a jeune entreprise innovante or a ministry-recognised innovative company, at gross annual pay of at least €39,582. If you have an offer, that route is considerably faster than founding.

What happens if recognition is refused?

This route closes, but the business creation route may still work if the project has €30,000 behind it and reads as viable. Deciding which to attempt first is worth doing properly, because the two ask for very different files.

How long is the card valid?

Up to four years, renewable, with talent-famille rights for a spouse and minor children.

Important notes

- Recognition by the economy ministry is the whole application, and it is the step you control least. A strong team and a genuinely novel product matter more than capital raised.
- Plan for the possibility that recognition is refused and the business creation route becomes the fallback — that decision is easier to make before you file than after.

NEXT STEP

Plan your France application with our Dubai team

Tell us about your profile, family and timeline. We will confirm whether **France Talent Card — Innovative Economic Project** fits, set out the full cost in writing and manage the application with you from start to finish.

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