GOLDENVISAS.FYI — GUIDE

How to Vet an Investment Migration Agent

Check the official authorised-agent list, verify the licence number, confirm the programmes the agent is authorised for, and spot red flags before you engage.

Updated November 1, 2026

Only **authorised agents** can submit residence-by-investment or citizenship-by-investment applications for most programmes. Engaging an unauthorised agent risks rejection, loss of fees and legal exposure.

Step 1: Find the official authorised-agent list

Every programme publishes its list on a government website. Bookmark the official URL:

| Programme | Official authorised-agent list | |---|---| | Malta MPRP | https://residencymalta.gov.mt/list-of-agents-residencymalta/ | | St Kitts and Nevis | https://ciu.gov.kn/authorised-agents-list/ (blacklist: https://ciu.gov.kn/blacklisted-agents/) | | Dominica | https://www.cbiu.gov.dm/dominica-citizenship/authorised-agents/ | | Grenada | https://imagrenada.gd/ (local-agent and marketing-agent lists; PDFs on cbi.gov.gd) | | Antigua and Barbuda | https://cip.gov.ag/how-to-apply/licensed-agents/ (representatives: https://cip.gov.ag/how-to-apply/authorised-representatives/) | | Saint Lucia | https://www.cipsaintlucia.com/agents-selection-page (blacklist: /black-listed-agents) | | Vanuatu | https://vancitizenship.gov.vu/index.php/about-us/designated-agents | | Portugal ARI | No central agent list; verify the lawyer on the Ordem dos Advogados at https://portal.oa.pt/ | | Greece golden visa | No central list; filings go through Greek lawyers. Verify on the local bar register (e.g. https://www.dsa.gr/) | | Italy investor visa | No central list; verify the avvocato on the Consiglio Nazionale Forense register at https://cnf.it/ | | Cyprus permanent residence | No central list; verify the lawyer on the Cyprus Bar Association register | | Türkiye citizenship | No central list; verify the avukat through the Union of Turkish Bar Associations at https://www.barobirlik.org.tr/ | | UAE golden visa | No central list; verify the provider's trade licence with the issuing DED or free zone | | USA EB-5 | Regional centres at uscis.gov; attorneys verified on state bar registers |

List URLs confirmed on the official government sites on 2026-11-01. Malta's MEIN citizenship scheme (repealed July 2025) and Spain's investor residence (ended April 2025) are not listed because they are closed.

Step 2: Verify the agent on the list

1. Open the official list URL above.
2. Search for the agent's **exact legal name** (not just a trading name).
3. Confirm the **authorisation number** or **licence number** matches what the agent gave you.
4. Check the **programmes authorised** — some agents are only authorised for specific programmes.

5. Note the **list date** — lists are updated quarterly. An agent removed from the current list is no longer authorised.

Step 3: Cross-check the agent's website

- The agent's website should display the same legal name and authorisation number.
- Look for a direct link to the official government list.
- Check the **Contact** page: a physical office address in the programme country is a positive signal.
- Verify **professional memberships** (IMC, AILA, STEP, local bar) on the respective membership directories.

Step 4: Ask the agent for written confirmation

Request a written statement (email or letter on letterhead) that includes:

- The agent's legal name and authorisation number
- The specific programme(s) they are authorised for
- The date they last confirmed their status on the official list
- Their professional indemnity insurance details (if applicable)

Red flags

| Red flag | Why it matters | |----------|----------------| | Agent not on the official list | Cannot legally submit your application | | Agent refuses to share authorisation number | May be unauthorised or using another firm's licence | | Agent guarantees approval | No agent can guarantee government approval | | Agent asks for cash or wire to a personal account | Fees should go to the government or the firm's client account | | Agent pressures you to skip due diligence | Enhanced due diligence is mandatory for CBI; skipping it is illegal | | Agent claims "special access" or "fast track" | No such channels exist; all applications follow the same process | | Agent's website has no physical address or team bios | May be a shell operation |

Step 5: Check disciplinary records

- **Malta**: Residency Malta publishes the Licensed Agents list for the MPRP.
- **Caribbean CBI**: The CIU and CBIU publish blacklisted agents (e.g. https://ciu.gov.kn/blacklisted-agents/, https://www.cbiu.gov.dm/dominica-citizenship/blacklisted-agents/, https://www.cipsaintlucia.com/black-listed-agents). Vanuatu publishes cancelled agents on vancitizenship.gov.vu.
- **USA**: Check state bar disciplinary records for attorneys.
- **EU**: Check national bar association registers for lawyers.

Step 6: Confirm the agent's scope

Some agents are:

- **Local agents** (based in the programme country) — required for Malta MPRP, Grenada, Antigua and Vanuatu; recommended everywhere.

- **International marketing agents** — can market but must work with a local authorised agent to file.
- **Law firms** — can provide legal advice and file applications; verify the lawyer's practising certificate.

For Caribbean CBI, you typically need **both** a local authorised agent (in the programme country) and your home-country adviser. The local agent files; your adviser coordinates.

Keep records

Save screenshots of the official list showing the agent's name, authorisation number and the date you checked. Keep all correspondence. If a dispute arises, this evidence protects you.

Quick checklist

- [ ] Agent found on official government list (URL saved)
- [ ] Authorisation number matches agent's claim
- [ ] Agent authorised for your target programme
- [ ] List is current (checked within 30 days)
- [ ] Agent provided written confirmation
- [ ] No disciplinary actions found
- [ ] Fees payable to firm's client account or government, not personal account
- [ ] Agent explains the full process, timeline and risks in writing

If any check fails, do not proceed. Find another agent from the official list.

Frequently asked questions

What is an authorised agent?

A firm or individual that the government has approved to submit residence or citizenship by investment applications on behalf of applicants. Only authorised agents can file applications for most programmes.

Can I apply directly without an agent?

Most programmes require an authorised agent. A few (e.g. Portugal ARI, Greece Golden Visa) allow direct application but an agent is still recommended for compliance.

What if an agent is not on the official list?

Do not engage them. Unauthorised agents cannot submit valid applications. Your application will be rejected and you may lose fees.

How often are authorised-agent lists updated?

Most governments update quarterly. Always check the official list on the government website, not a cached copy.