Freelancer Finance Starter Kit

A practical, repeatable system for income, expenses, cash flow, and tax preparation.

BudgetPilot | budgetpilot.ai

1. Build a clean financial boundary

[ ] Choose one workspace, account, card, or tagging rule for freelance activity.
[ ] List every place client income arrives: bank, Stripe, PayPal, Wise, or another processor.
[ ] Document how mixed purchases will be split and how reimbursements or owner contributions will be recorded.
NOTE: A dedicated business account is often cleaner, but this workflow helps while you are transitioning.

2. Create a transaction routine

[ ] Export transactions from every source at least monthly.
[ ] Normalize dates, descriptions, signed amounts, currencies, categories, types, accounts, and references.
[ ] Keep raw exports unchanged; work from a copy.
[ ] Remove duplicates using date, amount, currency, and reference together.
[ ] Record transfers separately so they are not counted as income or expenses twice.

3. Categorize consistently

[ ] Create a short category list based on how you actually operate.
[ ] Use one category for each recurring software vendor.
[ ] Separate direct client-delivery costs from general operating expenses.
[ ] Flag mixed-use purchases for review instead of guessing.
[ ] Keep invoices and receipts linked by a reference or file naming convention.

4. Review cash flow every week

[ ] Confirm new client payments and overdue invoices.
[ ] Compare cash received with cash spent, not only invoices issued.
[ ] Check subscriptions and upcoming obligations for the next 30 days.
[ ] Review unusual or uncategorized transactions.
[ ] Choose one action: follow up, delay a cost, reserve cash, or correct a category.

5. Prepare for taxes without pretending the rate is universal

[ ] Estimate taxable income from revenue minus eligible expenses.
[ ] Use a planning tax rate appropriate to your country and circumstances.

[ ] Move the estimated reserve on a weekly, monthly, or per-invoice schedule.
[ ] Reconcile your reserve against updated estimates during the year.
[ ] Ask a qualified professional about eligibility, mixed-use costs, and local filing rules.

Monthly close checklist

[ ] Reconcile every account and processor.
[ ] Confirm all invoices are recorded once.
[ ] Review recurring SaaS and unused subscriptions.
[ ] Export a clean monthly transaction file.
[ ] Save receipts and statements in a dated folder.
[ ] Review profit, cash balance, upcoming obligations, and tax reserve.

Useful next steps

[ ] Use the free tools at budgetpilot.ai/resources.
[ ] Convert text-based statements at budgetpilot.ai/tools/bank-statement-converter.
[ ] Calculate a planning reserve at budgetpilot.ai/tools/tax-reserve-calculator.
[ ] Organize separate financial contexts with BudgetPilot workspaces.