Instagram API Setup Guide

Create your Meta app and get a permanent access token for your own Instagram account, step by step.

Time needed: about 30–40 minutes, once.
Red boxes in the screenshots show where to click. Numbered boxes are clicked in order.

Screenshots taken November 2026. Meta changes its pages often, so buttons may look slightly different.

Before you start

You need:

• An Instagram account switched to **Creator** or **Business**, set to **public**.
• A **Facebook account**. Meta's developer portal can only be opened with Facebook. It does not have to be connected to your Instagram.
• Your **mobile phone** (for an SMS code) and access to your **email**.
• A computer, using the **browser you normally use for Facebook**.

At the end you will have:

• An **access token** that never expires.
• Your **Instagram account ID** (a long number).
You paste both into the program's `.env` file.

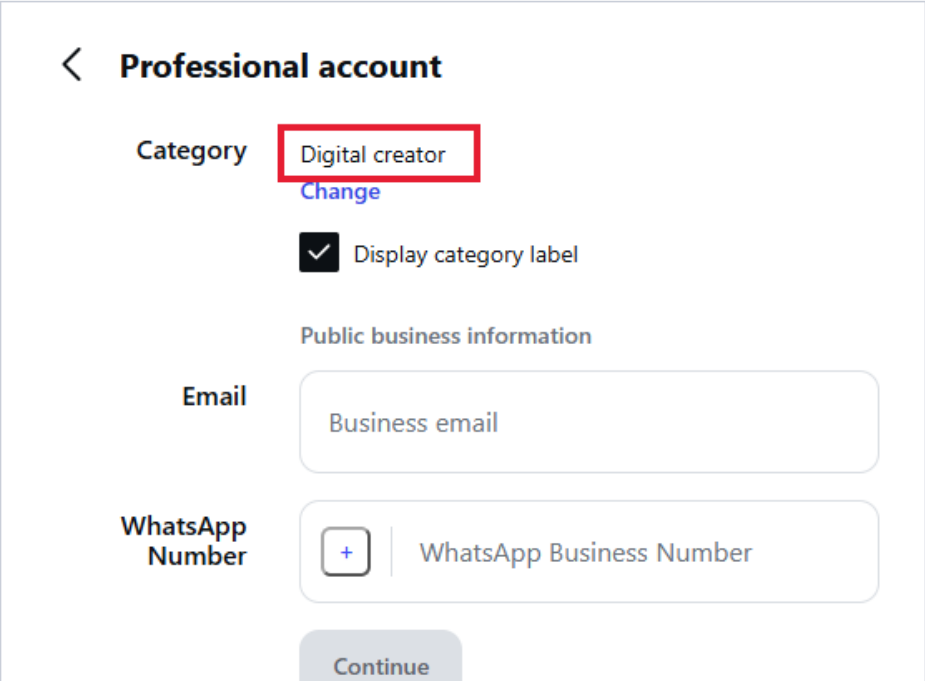
Important: Do the setup in the browser or on the device you normally use for Facebook. In incognito mode, or with a brand new Facebook account, Meta may block you with “You can't make this change at the moment”. If that happens, wait 1–2 days. See Troubleshooting at the end.

Note: This setup works for **your own** Instagram accounts, added as testers. Managing other people's accounts (for example as an agency) needs Meta Business Verification and App Review, which this guide does not cover.

Part 1: Prepare your Instagram account

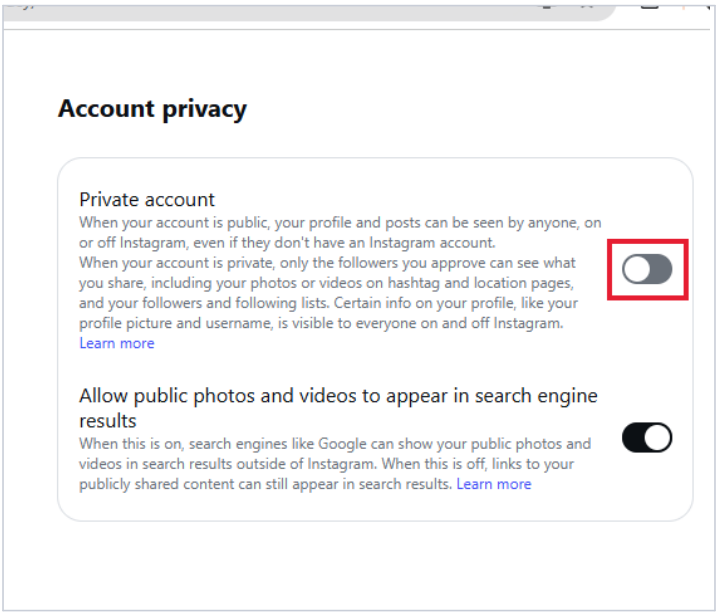
Step 1: Switch to a professional account

In Instagram, go to **Settings → Account type and tools** and switch to a **Creator** or **Business** account. Any category works, such as “Digital creator”. You can skip the email and WhatsApp fields, the API doesn't need them.



Step 2: Make the account public

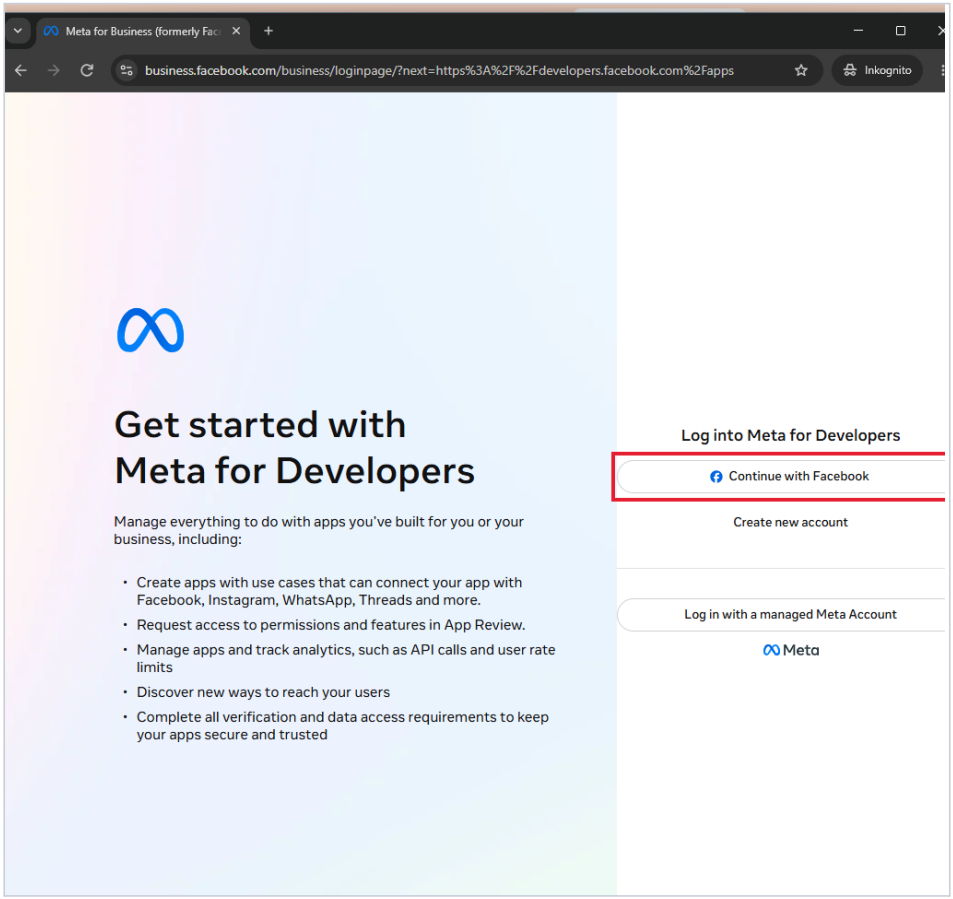
Go to **Settings → Account privacy** and make sure **Private account** is turned **off**.



Part 2: Create a Meta developer account

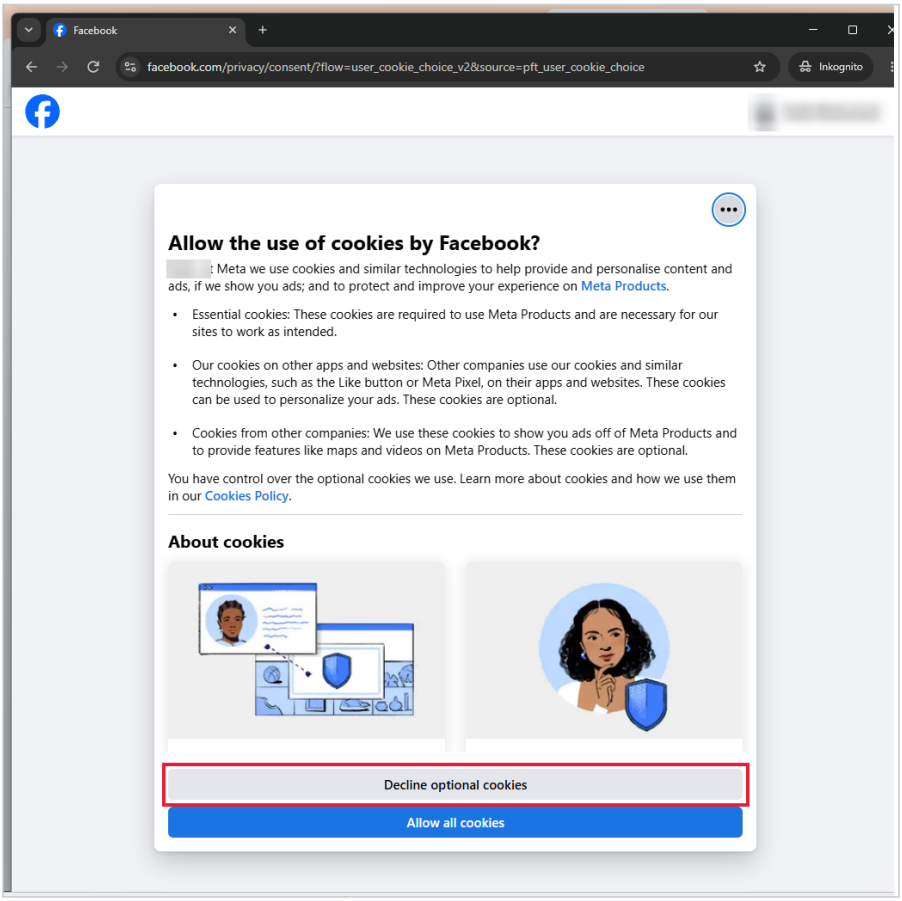
Step 3: Log in to Meta for Developers

Go to **developers.facebook.com/apps** and click **Login**, then **Continue with Facebook**. If you don't have Facebook, choose “Create new account”. It only offers “Sign up with Facebook”.



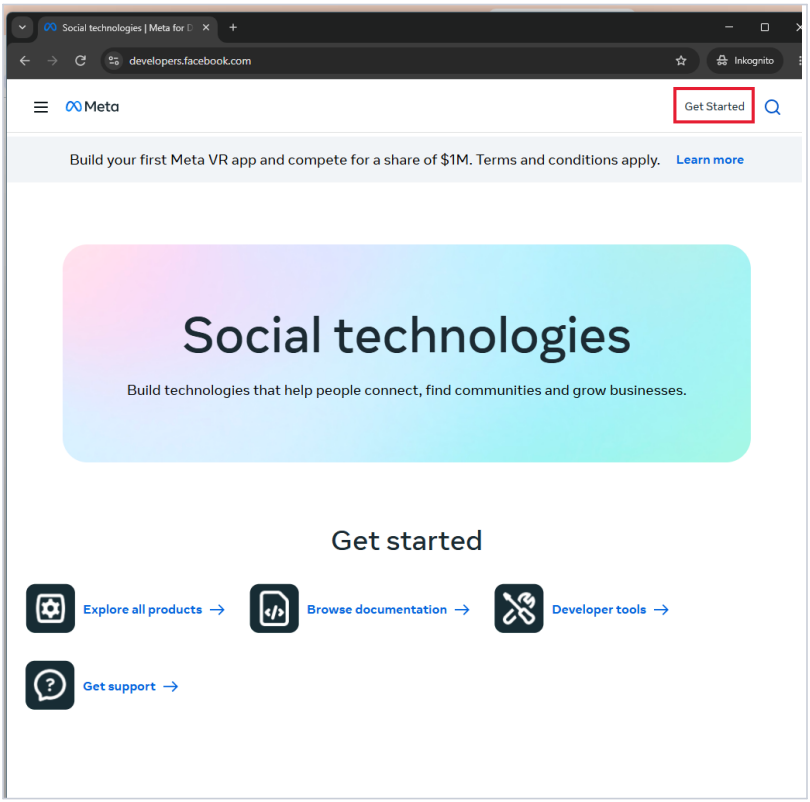
Step 4: Accept the cookie choice

If Facebook asks about cookies, click **Decline optional cookies** (or Allow all, both work).



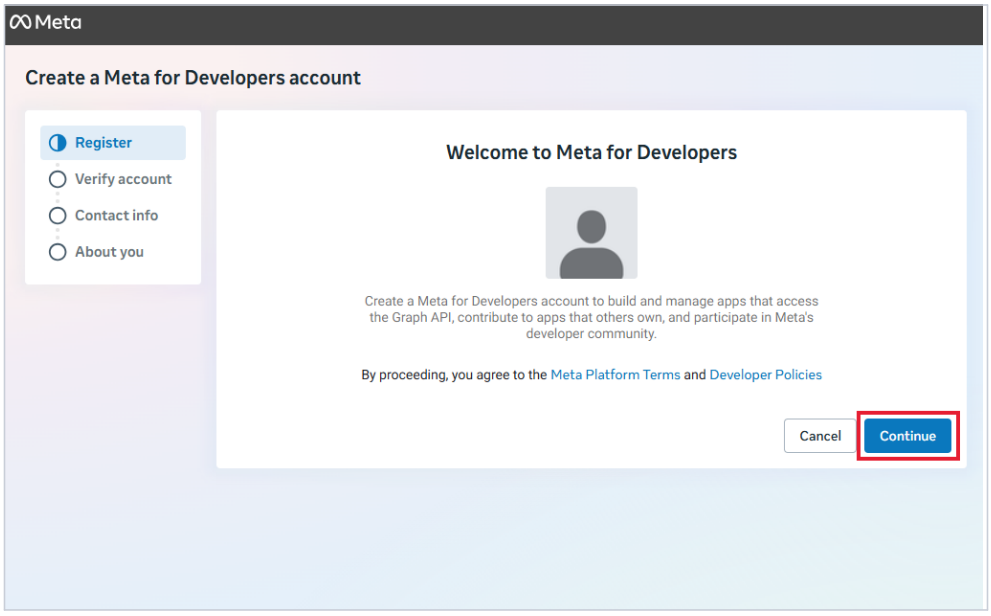
Step 5: Click Get Started

Back on developers.facebook.com, click **Get Started** in the top right corner. (If you already see “My Apps”, you're registered and can skip to Part 3.)



Step 6: Start the registration

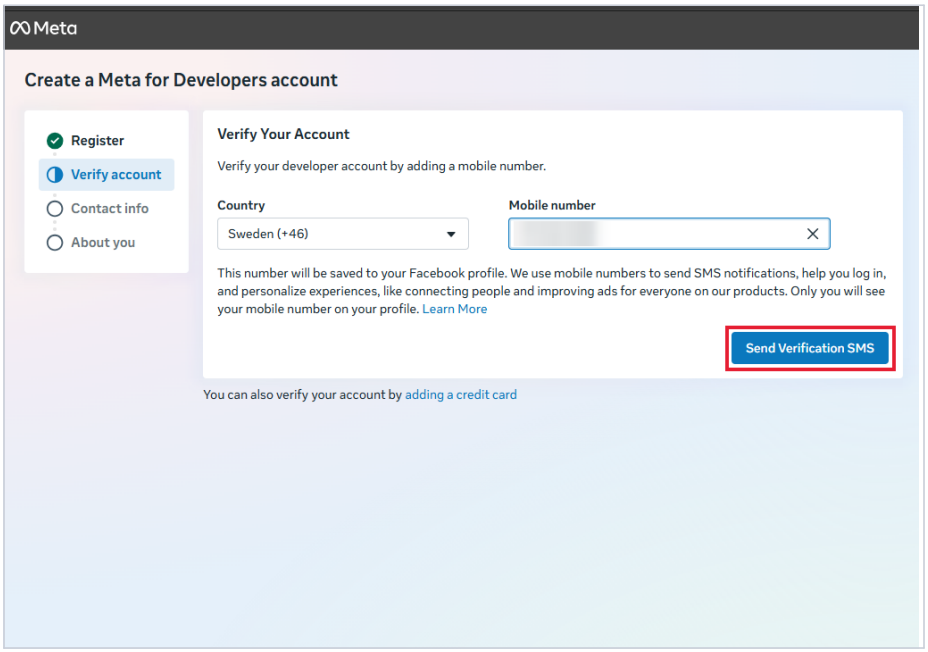
Registration has 4 short steps: Register, Verify account, Contact info and About you. Click **Continue**.



Step 7: Verify your phone number

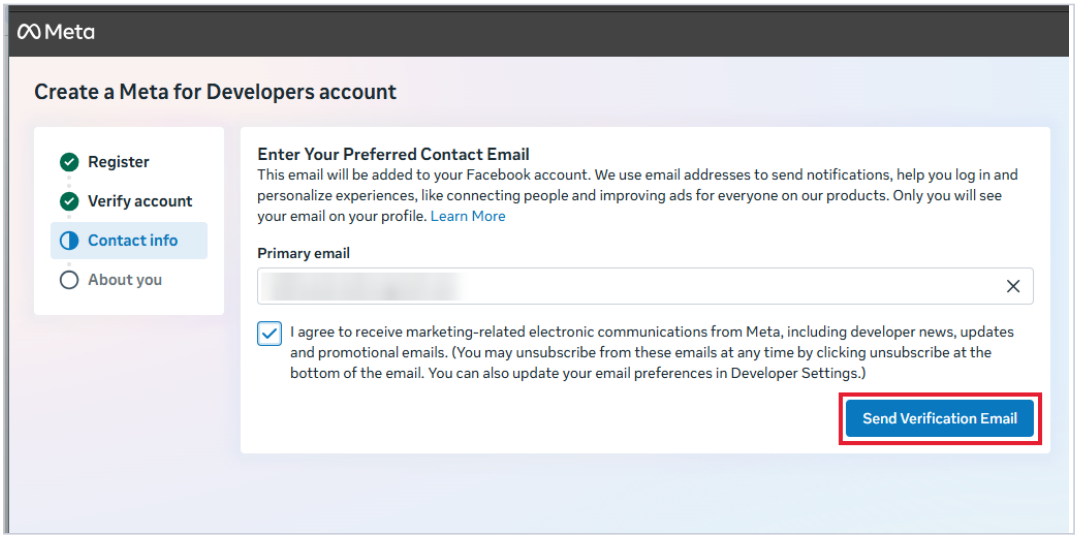
Choose your country and type your mobile number **without the first 0** (for Sweden: 7XXXXXXXX). Click **Send Verification SMS** and enter the code.

The number is saved to your Facebook profile. If you'd rather not use your phone, you can verify with a credit card instead (link under the box).



Step 8: Confirm your email

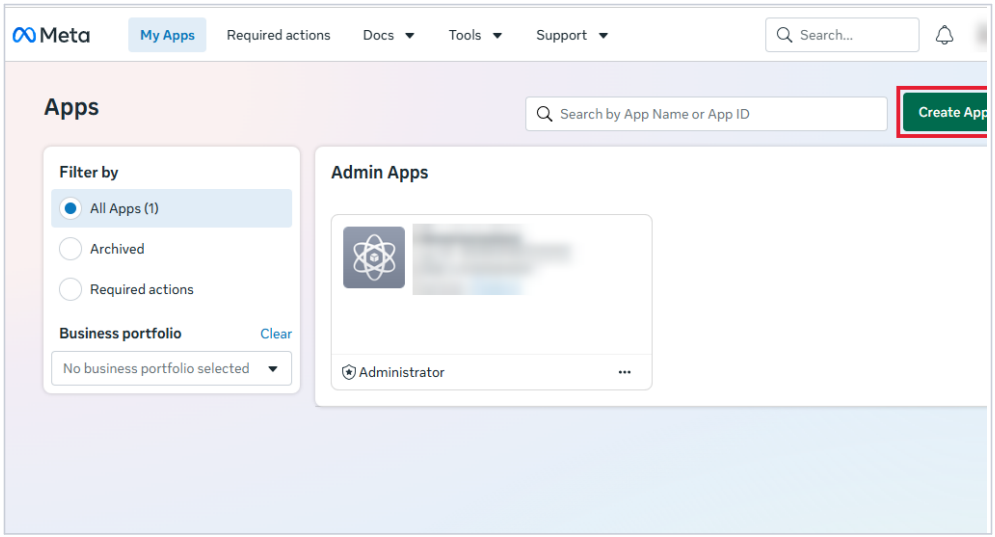
Type your email, **double-check the @**, and click **Send Verification Email**. Enter the code from your inbox. The marketing tick box is optional. Then answer the short **About you** question.



Part 3: Create the app

Step 9: Click Create App

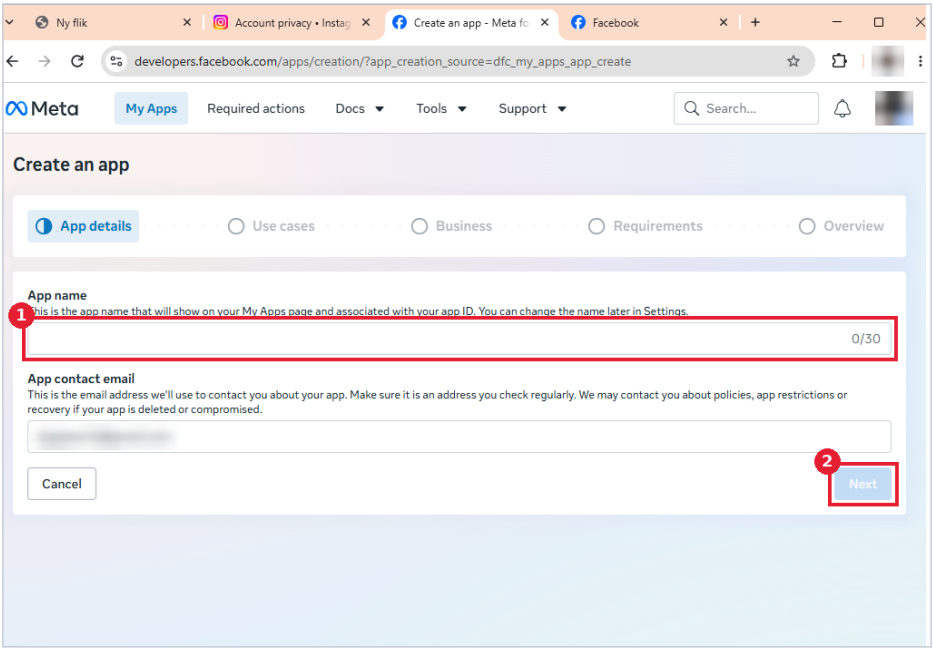
On **My Apps**, click the green **Create App** button. (Your list is empty the first time.)



Step 10: Name your app

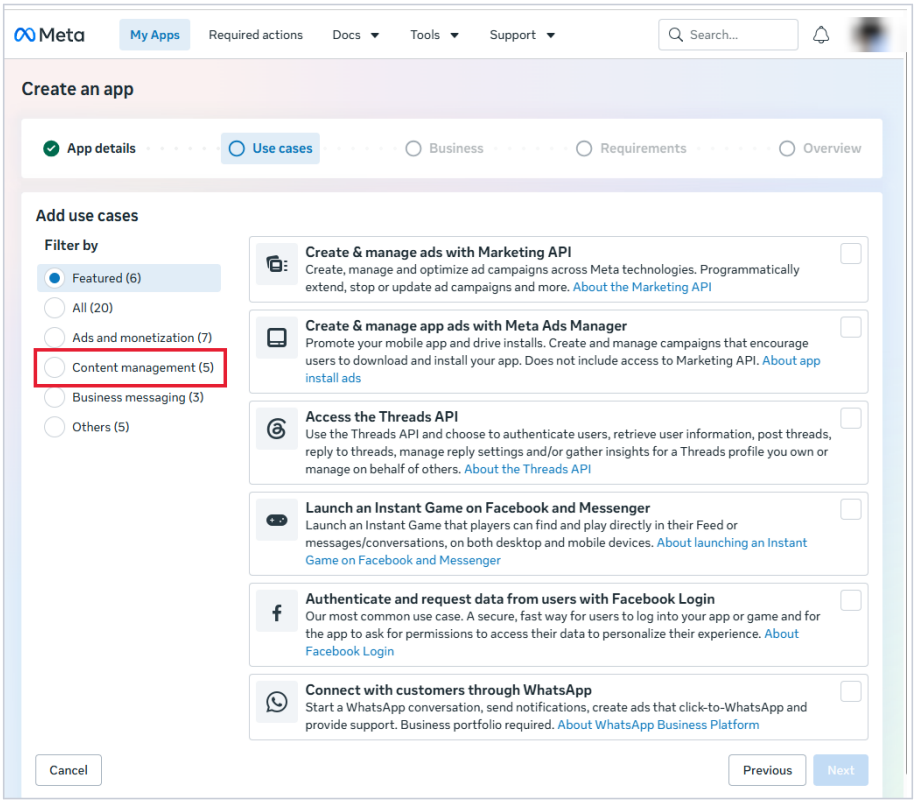
Type an app name, for example **Comment Filter**, and check the contact email. Click **Next**.

Don't use the words Instagram, Insta, IG, Facebook or Meta in the name, or Meta will reject it.



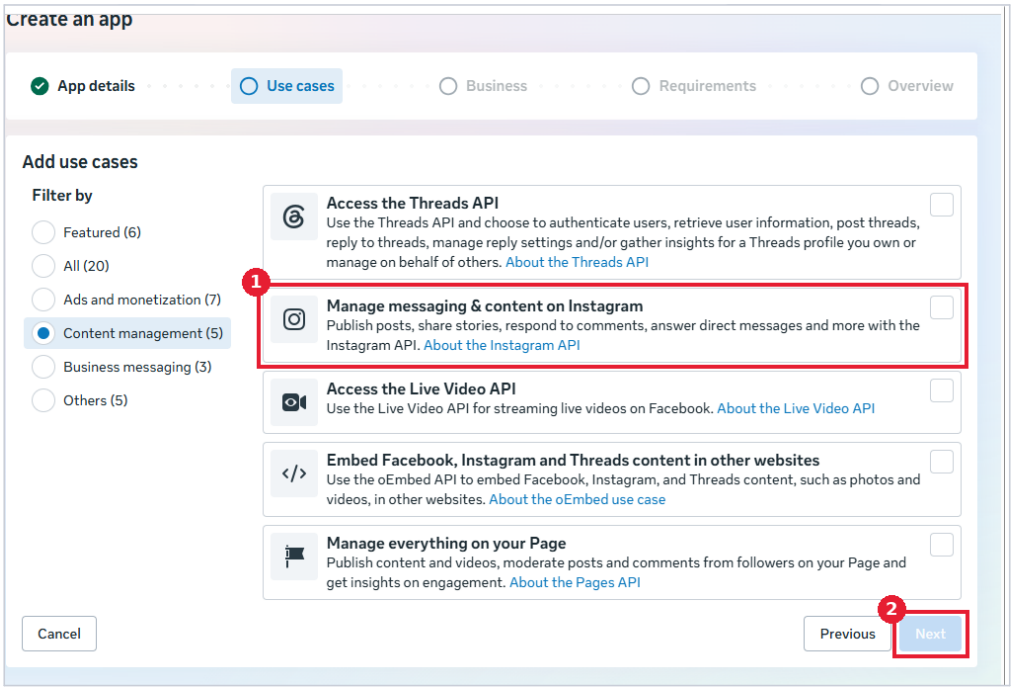
Step 11: Open Content management

In the **Filter by** menu on the left, click **Content management**.



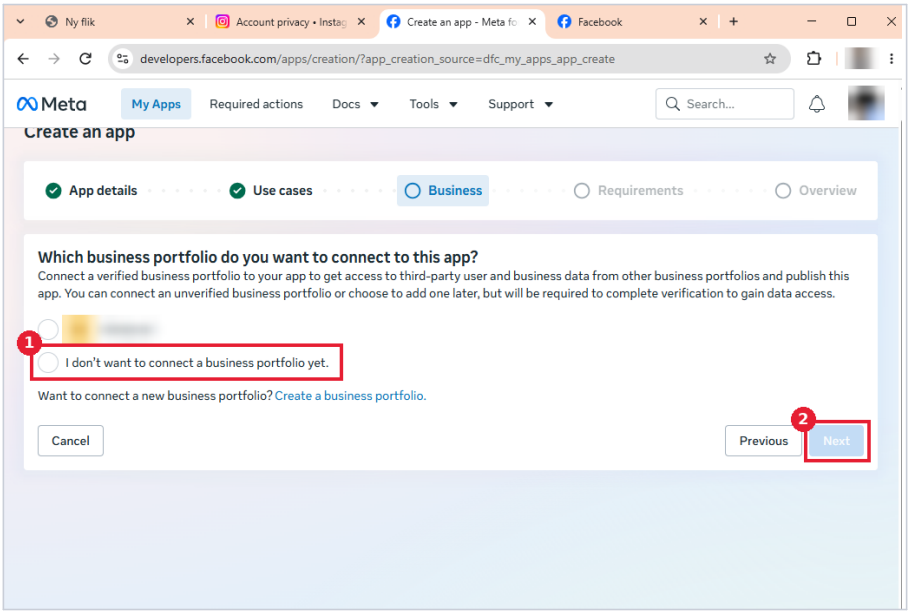
Step 12: Choose the Instagram use case

Tick **Manage messaging & content on Instagram**. Leave everything else empty and click **Next**.



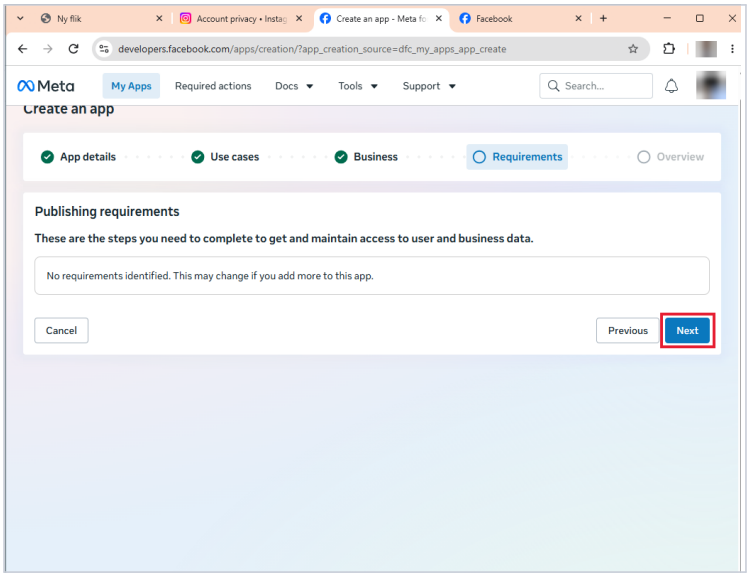
Step 13: Skip the business portfolio for now

Choose **I don't want to connect a business portfolio yet** and click **Next**. You'll create one in Part 4.



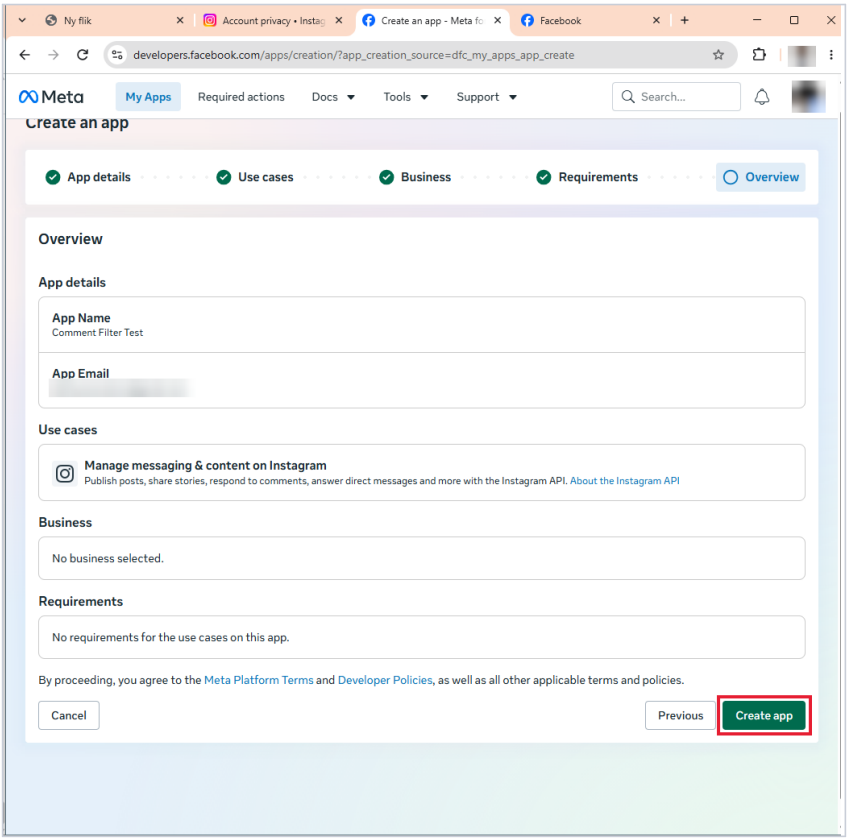
Step 14: Requirements

It should say **No requirements identified**. Click **Next**.



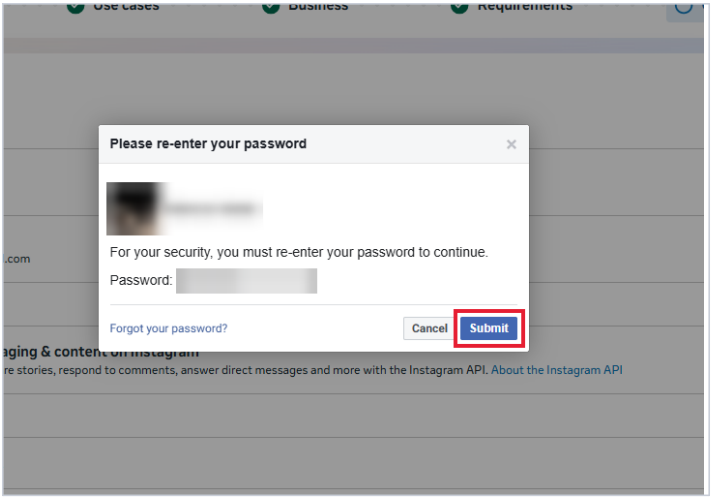
Step 15: Create the app

Check the overview (app name, email and the Instagram use case) and click **Create app**.



Step 16: Confirm with your password

Meta asks for your Facebook password. Type it and click **Submit**. If you forgot it, reset it and start Part 3 again: first check **My Apps**, the app may already exist.

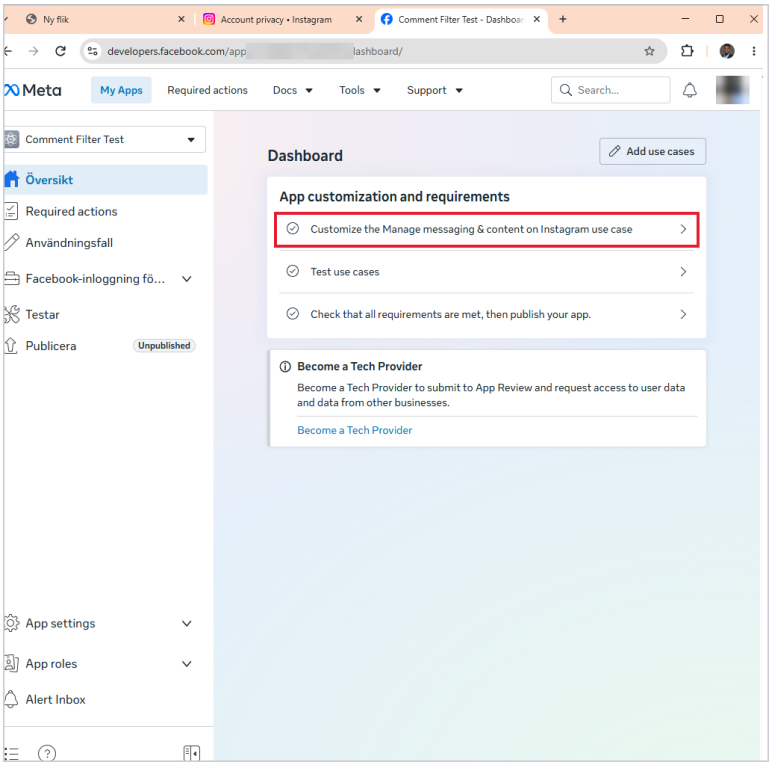


Part 4: Set up Unified login and a business portfolio

New apps use **Instagram API with Unified Login**. Your users can log in with Instagram or Facebook, no Facebook Page needed, and the token never expires. It requires a free business portfolio.

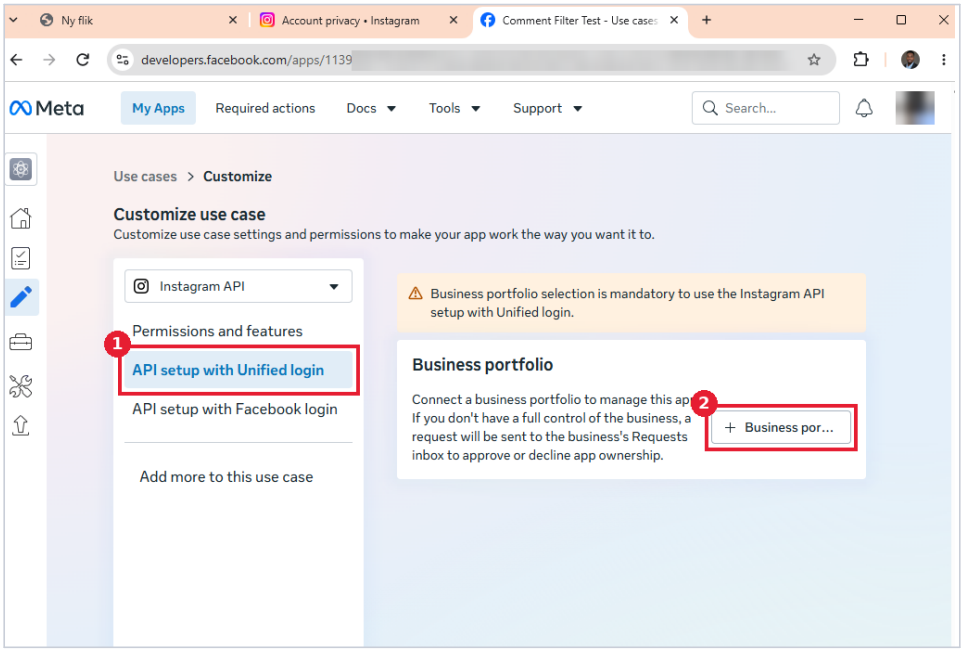
Step 17: Open the Instagram use case

On the app **Dashboard**, click **Customize the Manage messaging & content on Instagram use case**.



Step 18: Add a business portfolio

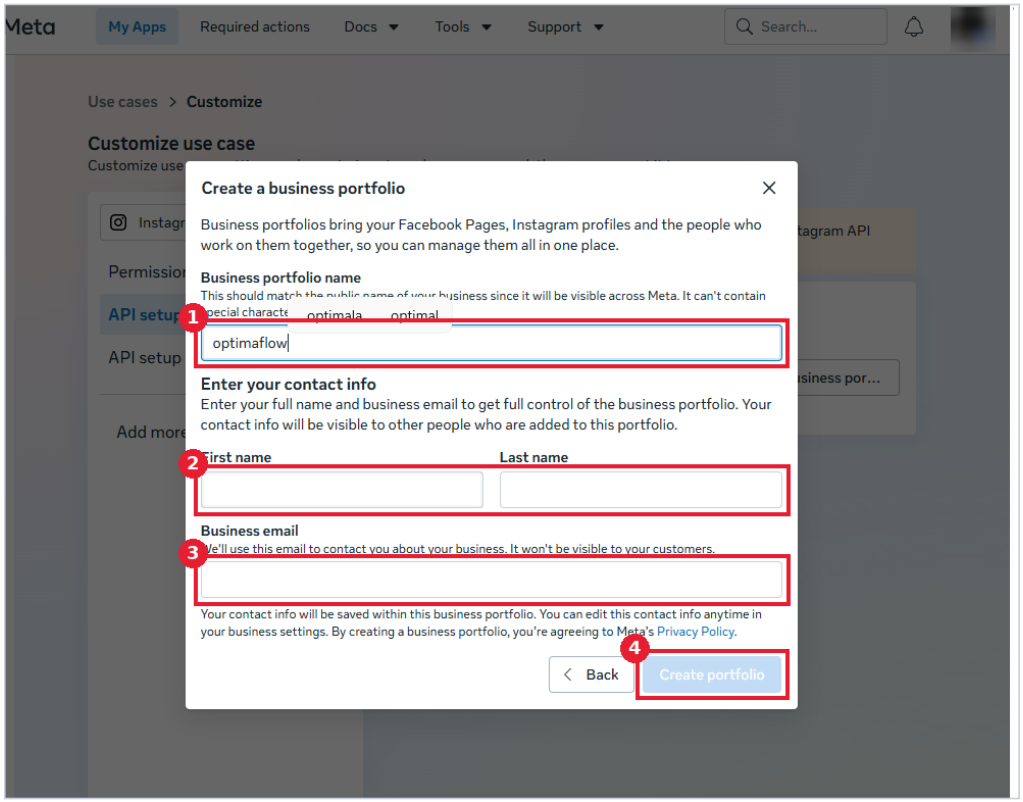
Make sure **API setup with Unified login** is selected on the left, then click **+ Business portfolio**. If you already have a portfolio, choose it. Otherwise create a new one.



Step 19: Create the business portfolio

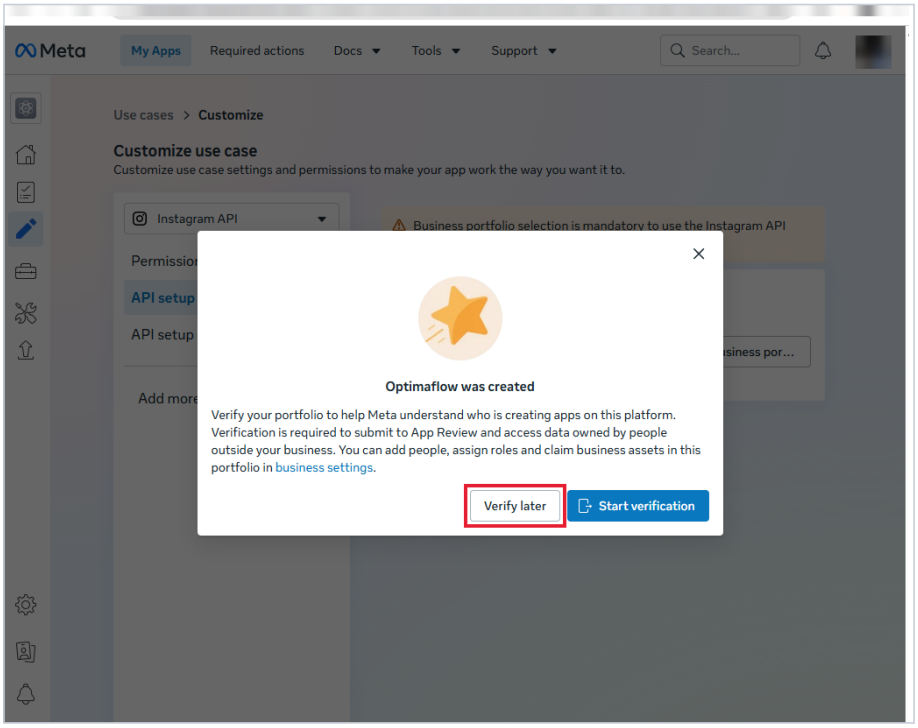
Fill in (1) the business name, (2) your first and last name, the same as on your ID, and (3) your business email. Click (4) **Create portfolio**.

The name must **start with a capital letter** and contain no special characters, otherwise you get “Business Name Not Allowed”.



Step 20: Verify later

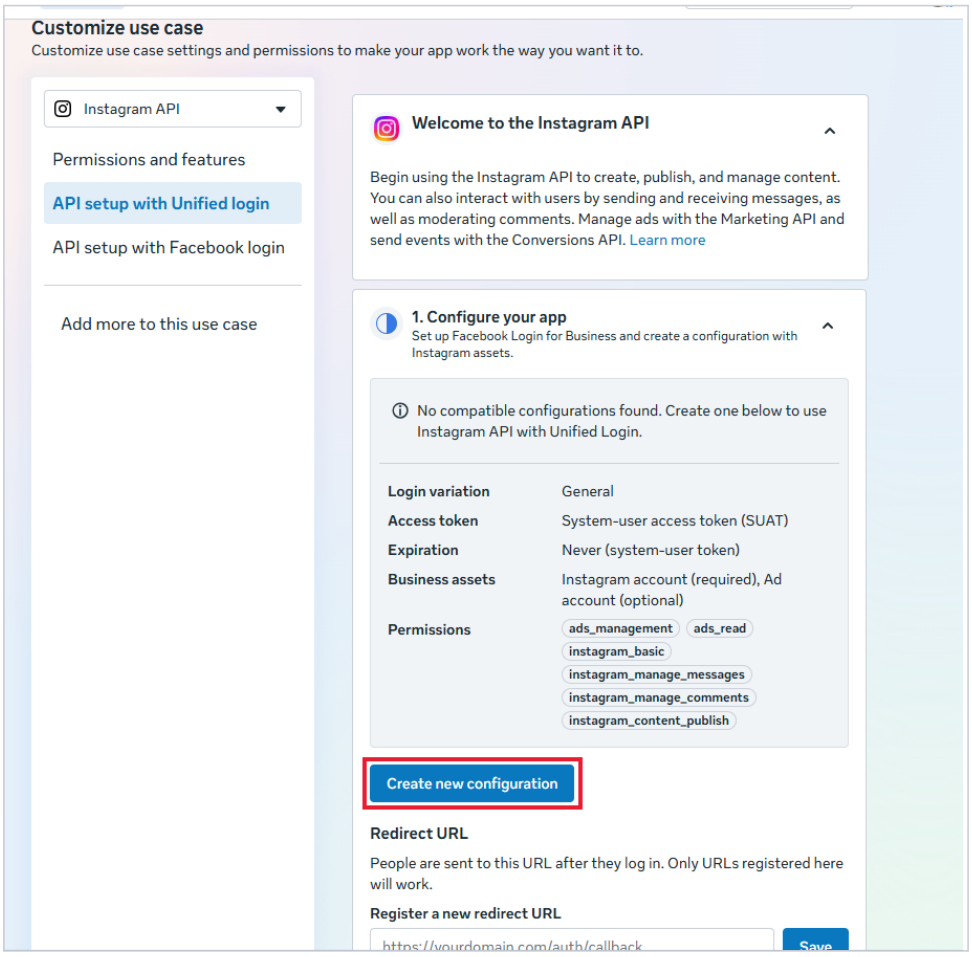
Click **Verify later**. Verification is only needed for App Review, not for your own accounts.



Part 5: Create the login configuration

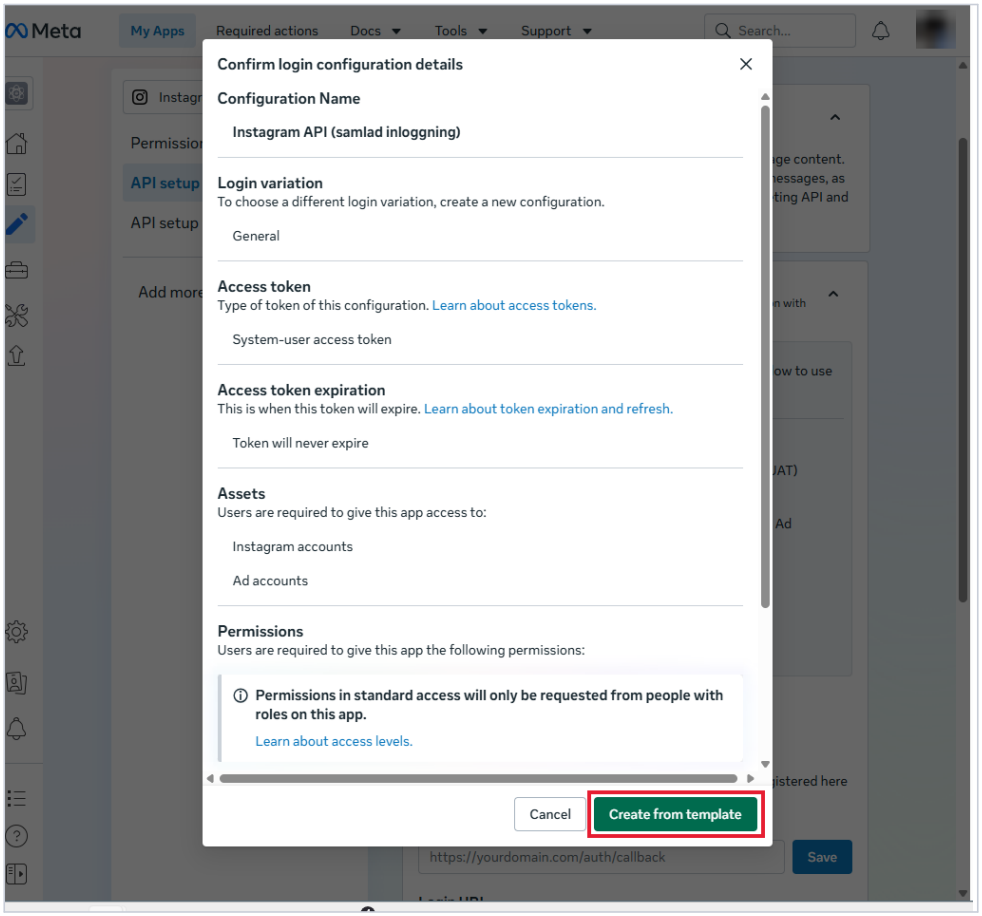
Step 21: Create a new configuration

Under **1. Configure your app**, click **Create new configuration**. The box above it shows what you get: a system-user token that **never expires**, with permissions for comments, messages and publishing. You can skip **Redirect URL** for now.



Step 22: Create from template

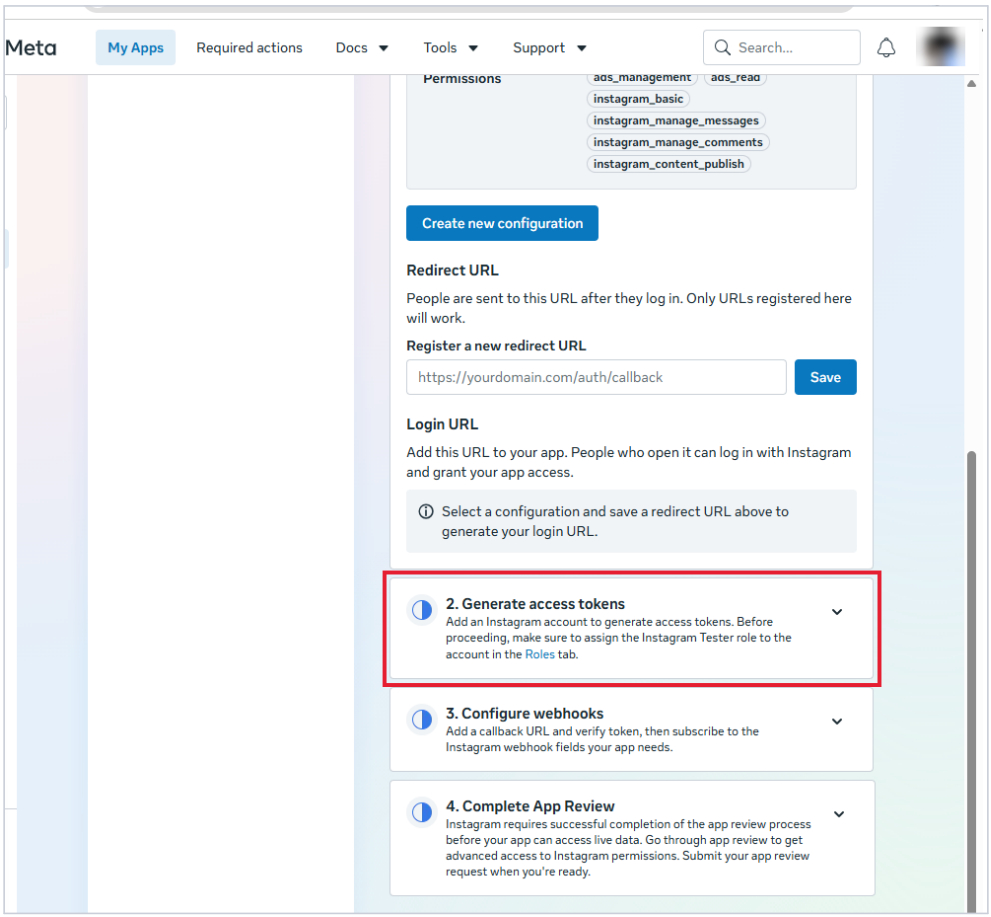
Check the details and click **Create from template**.



Part 6: Add your Instagram account as a tester

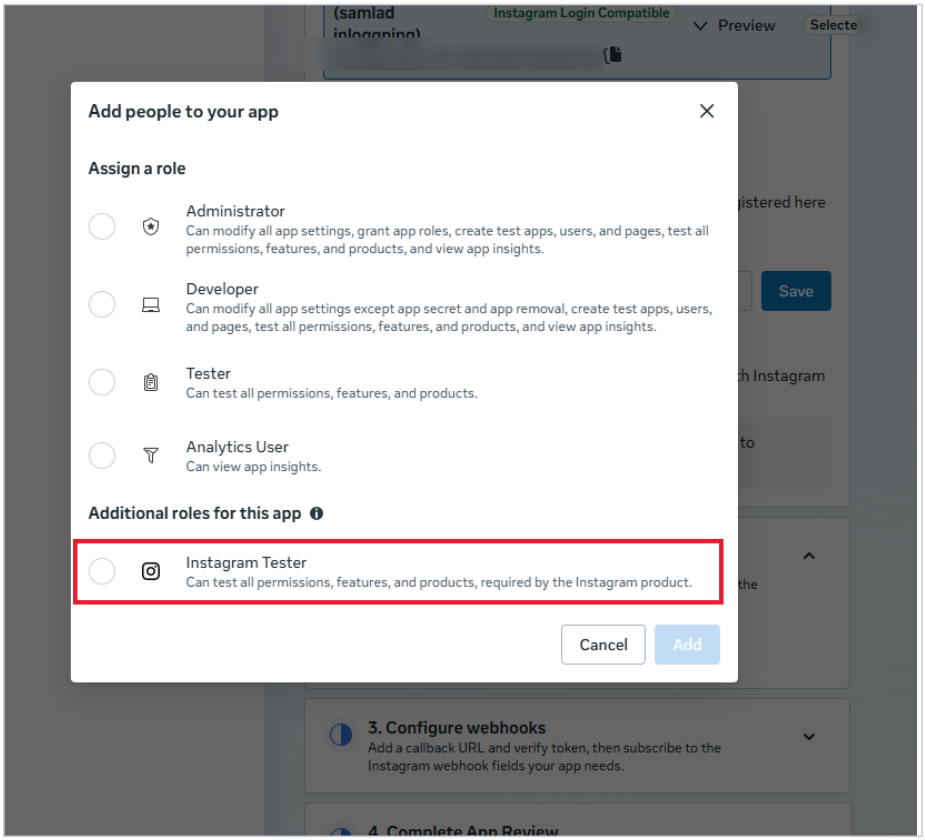
Step 23: Open Generate access tokens

Scroll down to **2. Generate access tokens**. Meta needs your Instagram account to have the **Instagram Tester** role first. Click the **Roles** link, or open the step and add the account.



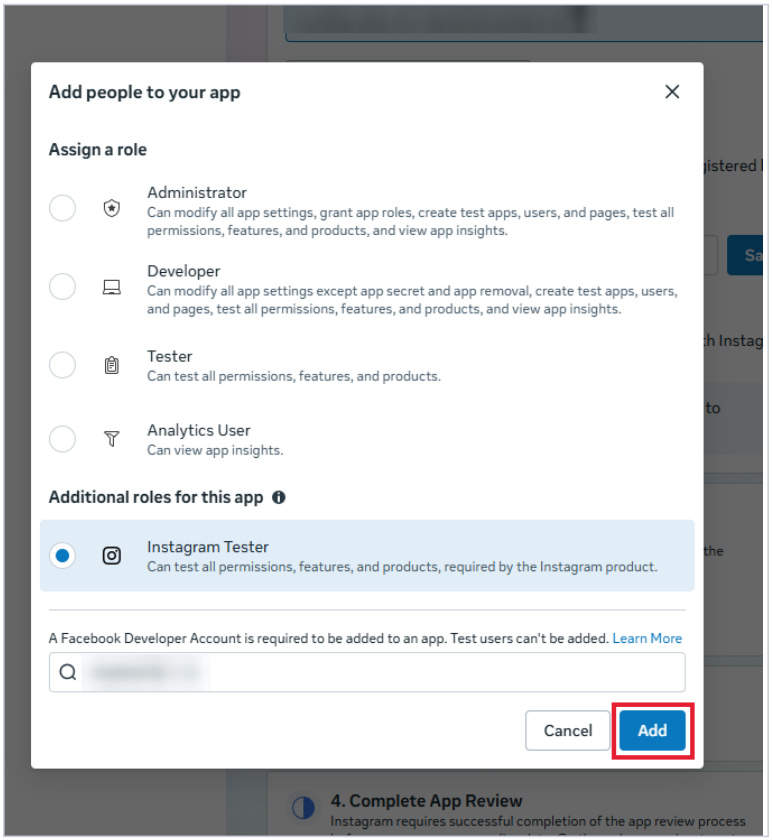
Step 24: Choose Instagram Tester

Select **Instagram Tester** under “Additional roles for this app”.



Step 25: Add your Instagram username

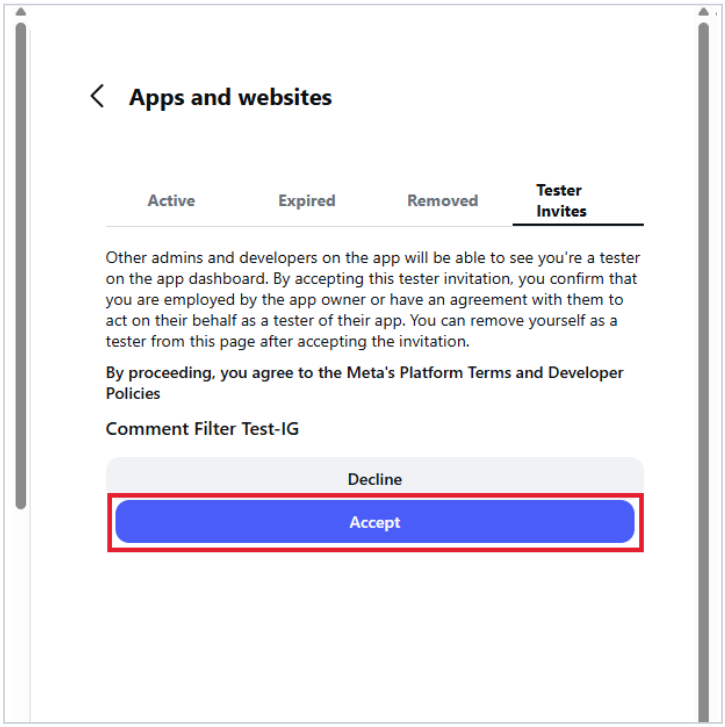
Type your Instagram username **without the @**, wait for it to appear in the list and click it, then click **Add**.



Tip: If you see “Form can't be saved: Invalid id”, check Instagram anyway. In our test the invite was sent despite the error.

Step 26: Accept the invite in Instagram

On **instagram.com**, go to **Settings → Apps and websites → Tester invites** and click **Accept**. Direct link: **instagram.com/accounts/manage_access/**

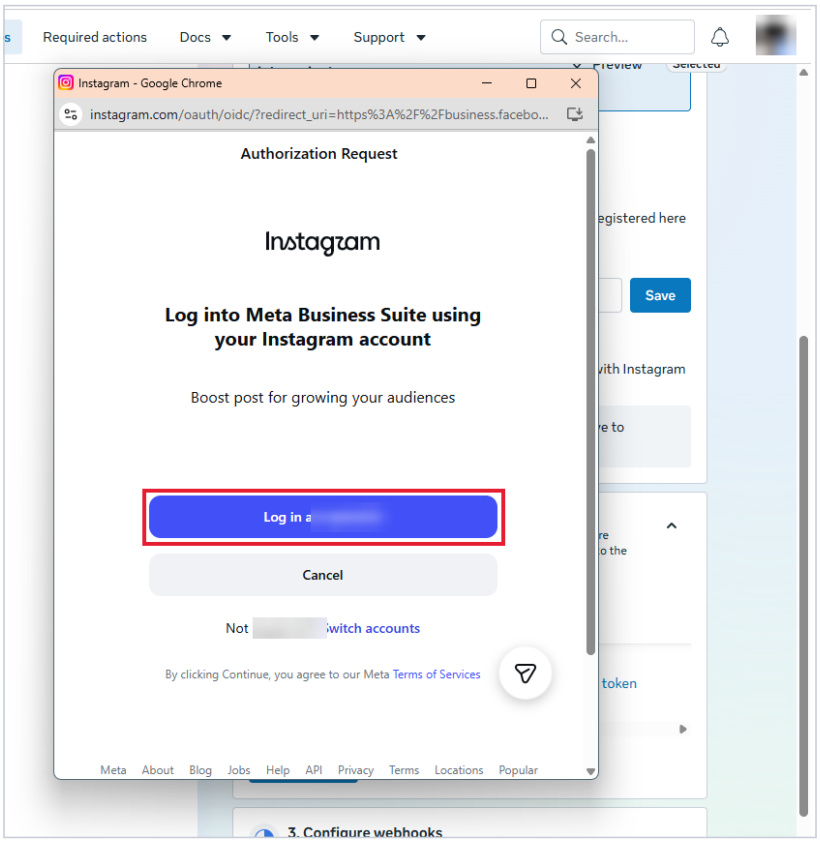


Part 7: Generate your access token

Go back to the app, reload the page, open **2. Generate access tokens** and click **Add account**. A login window opens.

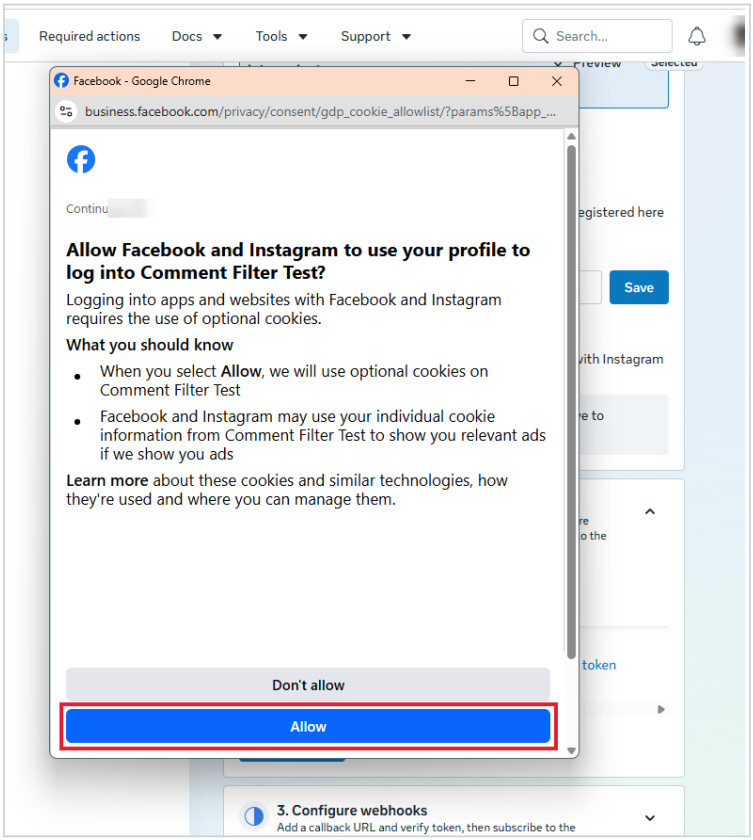
Step 27: Log in with Instagram

Click **Log in as** your account. Ignore the “Boost post” text, that's Meta's standard wording.



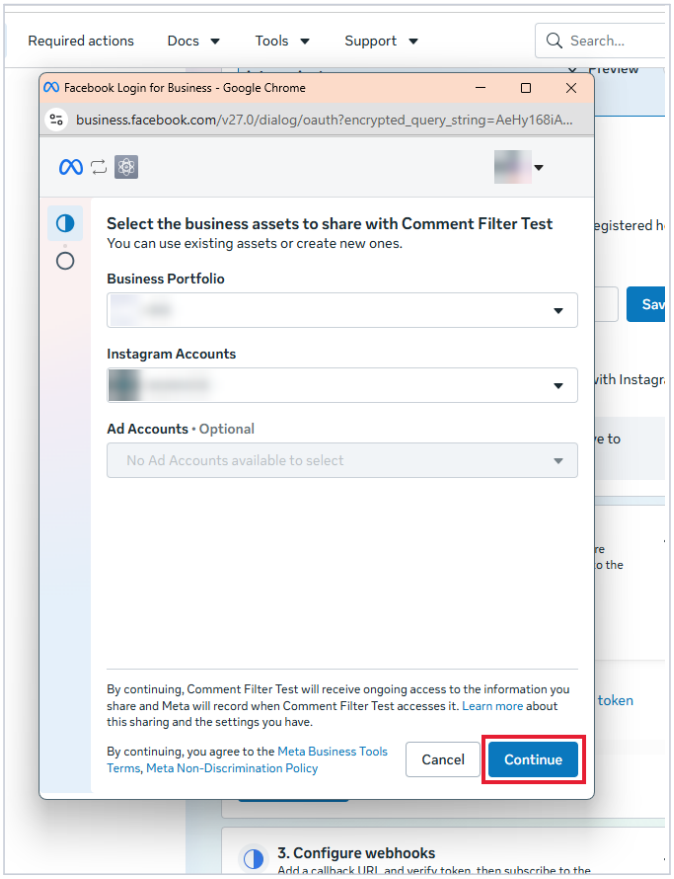
Step 28: Allow cookies

Click **Allow**. Here the cookies are needed for the login, “Don't allow” stops it.



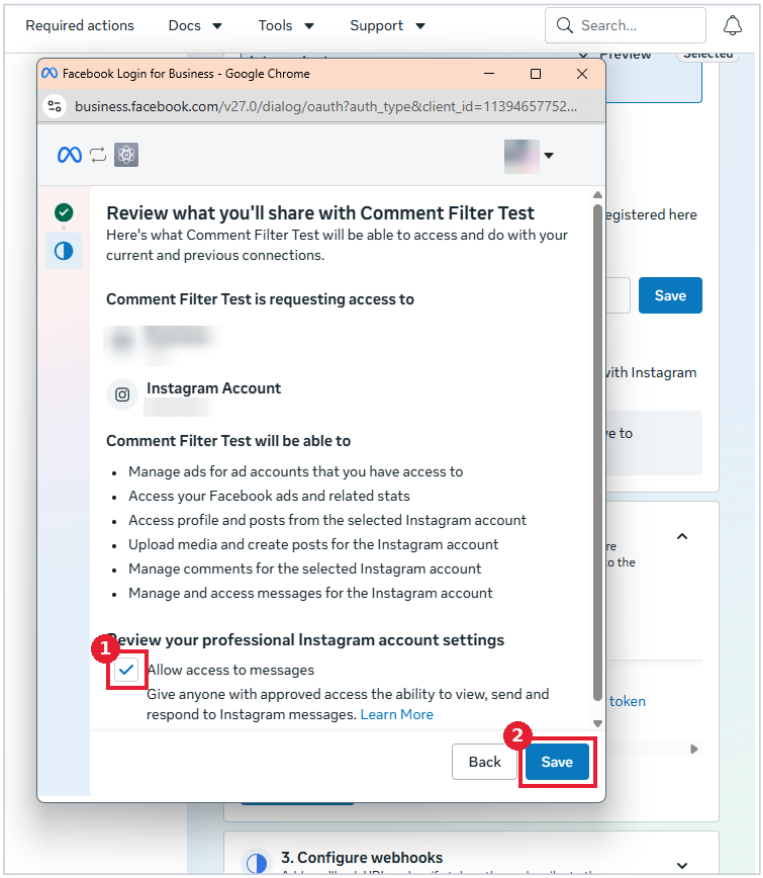
Step 29: Choose the business assets

Check that the right **Business Portfolio** and **Instagram account** are selected. Ad Accounts is optional, leave it empty. Click **Continue**. Meta may have created a portfolio automatically, named after your Instagram account. That's normal.



Step 30: Review and save

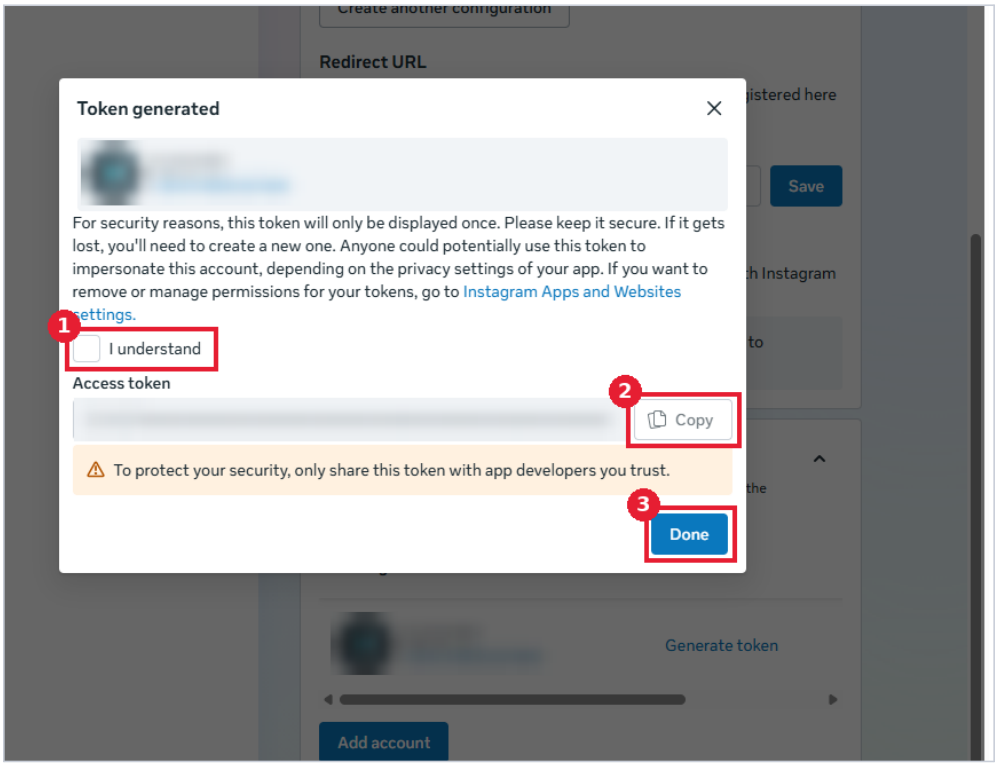
Keep (1) **Allow access to messages** ticked and click (2) **Save**.



Step 31: Copy your token

Tick (1) **I understand**, click (2) **Copy**, paste the token into your .env file (Part 8), and only then click (3) **Done**.

The token is shown **only once**. The number under your username is your **Instagram account ID**. Copy it too.



Important: The token works like a password and never expires. Never share it, post it in a chat, or upload it to GitHub. If it leaks, click Generate token to create a new one.

Part 8: Save the token in the program

In the program folder, create a file named `.env` (or open the existing one) and add:

```
IG_ACCESS_TOKEN=paste_your_token_here
IG_USER_ID=your_instagram_account_id
```

Save the file. If you use Git, add `.env` to `.gitignore`. You're done, the token never needs renewing.

Troubleshooting

“You can't make this change at the moment”

Meta thinks you're on a new device (incognito, a new browser or a brand new Facebook account). Stop retrying, since repeated attempts can lock the account for longer. Wait 1–2 days, or finish from the device you normally use for Facebook. Changing the email does not help.

“This email address can't be used”

The email is already used by another Facebook account. Use a different one.

“Business Name Not Allowed”

Start the name with a capital letter and remove special characters, for example “Optimaflow”, not “optimaflow”.

“Form can't be saved: Invalid id” when adding a tester

Pick the account from the search list. Don't just press Enter. Check Instagram's Tester invites anyway, the invite is often sent even with this error.

“API setup with Instagram login” is missing

Meta no longer offers it for new apps. Use “API setup with Unified login” as shown in Part 4.

The developer page keeps showing the registration

You're logged in with a Facebook account that isn't registered. On facebook.com, click your profile picture and log out or switch account.

I lost my token

Open the app → Instagram use case → 2. Generate access tokens, and click Generate token next to your account.