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Ecosystem Connectors | Berlin-Sarajevo-Tirana launch event in Berlin in October 2024

GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL STATES PROGRAMME

BUND-LÄNDER-PROGRAMM (BLP)

Federal state – partner country
Berlin - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania

Title
Promoting innovation networks between start-up ecosystems in Berlin and the Western Balkans

In cooperation with the GIZ projects
"Strenghtening Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP)" in Bosnia and Herzegovina and "EU4Innovation" in Albania

Financing arrangements

BMZ contribution	270.177 EUR
Berlin contribution	273.315 EUR

Duration
01.06.2024 – 31.12.2025

Responsible ministry
Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises

This project helps to achieve the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Ecosystem Connectors Berlin Sarajevo Tirana

Local situation

As throughout the Western Balkans, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are of major importance for creating jobs and generating income. However, the private sector in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina must continue its transformation if it is to adapt successfully to the changing process and production conditions that would enable integration into international supply chains. Both countries still require assistance in transforming their economy, which is characterised by state-run socialist-style enterprises, into one with more private initiatives. Both also clearly demonstrate the political will to support this transformation, and the tech scene in both Sarajevo and Tirana shows visible growth with innovative start-ups in various sectors.

The project promotes networking between the European start-up ecosystems in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Berlin. Its objective is to support stronger economic integration by facilitating partnerships and the sharing of knowledge and resources between entrepreneurs and institutions in order to foster innovations from all three states.

Cooperation arrangements

The cooperation partner in Berlin is the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and

"The Ecosystem Connectors | Berlin Sarajevo Tirana project is more than just economic cooperation – it is a statement of partnership and shared ambition. The project aligns with Berlin's vision of creating an interconnected European startup network, which is based on sharing knowledge and resources in a way that transcends borders and strengthens Europe's economy as a whole."

Franziska Giffey
Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises, Berlin

Ecosystem Connectors | Berlin Sarajevo, Tirana Launchevent Berlin Oktober 2024

Public Enterprises. The project's implementation partner is enpact e.V. (in Berlin), an association which encourages international networking between start-up ecosystems. At the local level, the project cooperates with the technical cooperation project Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion (SEDEP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EU4Innovation project in Albania, plus their partner institutions, to promote innovation.

What we are doing - and how

The German Government and Federal States Programme (BLP) project aims to establish and strengthen networks between the start-up ecosystems of Sarajevo, Tirana and Berlin, and thus to foster a sustainably stronger economy in the Western Balkan region. At the same time, this helps create closer ties between the two countries and the EU single market.

A stakeholder mapping exercise identifies the partners with the greatest potential for making a positive contribution to the project. The project uses targeted activities concentrating on the development of networks, public relations work, dialogues and exchanges to strengthen start-ups in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with innovation support organisations (ISOs), especially those from Sarajevo and Tirana. This support is directed particularly at networks for promoting female entrepreneurship in Tirana and Sarajevo.

The continuous dialogue between the stakeholders forms the core of the project and is realised through study trips to Berlin, Tirana and Sarajevo, which build on start-up conferences in the target regions. Virtual dialogue formats are also being used. In addition, the project intends to make the Sarajevo and Tirana regions better known and more visible in Berlin, which should also make the target regions more attractive for business relations and investments. It also contributes to a regional exchange between the start-up ecosystems in Tirana and Sarajevo.

Useful links

- Further information on the BLP:
  https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/132983.html
  https://bund-laender-programm.de/en
- Cooperating GIZ projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina
  https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/153222.html
  and Albania
  https://www.giz.de/en/html/index.html
- Homepage of the cooperation project:
  https://enpact.org/ecosystem-connectors-berlin-sarajevo-tirana/

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