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Exchange between Ukrainian entrepreneurs and the Berlin Senator for Economic Affairs

GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL STATES PROGRAMME
BUND-LÄNDER-PROGRAMM (BLP)

Federal state - partner country
Berlin - Ukraine

Title
Promoting innovation networks between start-up ecosystems in Berlin and Ukraine II

In cooperation with the GIZ programme
STEP IN 2 EU – Supporting the Ukrainian economy through EU approximation

Financing arrangements

BMZ contribution	180,000 EUR
Berlin contribution	120,012 EUR

Duration
01.08.2025 - 31.12.2026

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

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



Connecting the start-up ecosystems Berlin and Kyiv

Local situation

Kyiv is home to Ukraine's leading start-up ecosystem. With a skilled and innovative workforce, this ecosystem is dominated by tech start-ups. At the same time, it faces challenges such as limited access to capital and the effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including infrastructural damage and the exodus of talent.

The Russian invasion has fundamentally worsened the country's economic situation, especially for small and medium-sized enter-prises (SMEs). Investments in the country are associated with high risks. However, new economic opportunities have emerged from the country's status as an EU accession candidate and the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (EU).

Berlin is recognised as being the thriving start-up hub of Europe. Building on the twinning agreement signed by Berlin and Kyiv in 2023, this project aims to build bridges between the dynamic start-up ecosystems in both cities and to strengthen economic relations by creating specific initiatives and promoting the establishment of direct links at private sector level.

“Kyiv has established itself in recent years as an emerging tech hub in Eastern Europe. It is home to an exciting mix of highly qualified IT specialists and creative talents within an innovative ecosystem. At the same time, the people in this war-torn country have shown impressive resilience. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine and our twin city Kyiv. By working together, we strengthen each other and open up new markets and opportunities – despite the war, but above all looking beyond the war.”

Franziska Giffey
Mayor of Berlin and Berlin State Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public EnterprisesEnterprises



Participants at the Ukrainian stand at the tech- and startup fair Gitex Europe in Berlin

Cooperation arrangements

Cooperation partner on the Berlin side is the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises. The main implementation partner in Ukraine is the Kyiv City Council. The project cooperates at local level with the GIZ project “STEP IN 2 EU” in Ukraine and its project partners. Other partner institutions are the Ukrainian Startup Fund and TechUkraine as well as the Entrepreneurship and Export Promotion Office.

What we are doing - and how

The project aims to strengthen the links between the start-up ecosystems of Kyiv and Berlin. This also contributes to the goals of the Ukraine Recovery Conference.

The BLP project strengthens the capacities of stakeholders in the Kyiv start-up ecosystems to identify cooperation and business opportunities with stakeholders from Berlin and the EU through exchange formats for state actors involved in economic development, grants for start-ups and innovation support organisations (fellowships), and networking within the framework of Europe’s innovation landscape, with the aim of jointly submitting EU applications. Networks promoting female entrepreneurship in Kyiv will also be supported. The project is sector agnostic. Digital tech start-ups will be addressed, taking green business elements into account.

Useful links

- Information on the BLP:
  https://www.giz.de/en/projects/german-government-and-federal-states-programme-iii
  https://bund-laender-programm.de/en
- Website of the cooperating GIZ programme STEP IN 2 EU :
  https://www.giz.de/en/projects/support-trade-economy-policies-institutions-norms-step-2-eu
- Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises:
  https://www.berlin.de/sen/web/en/startups/

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