

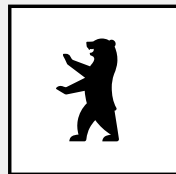


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Berlin meets Tirana event 2025

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

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



**Title**  
Promotion of innovation networks between startup ecosystems in Berlin and the Western Balkans II

**In cooperation with the GIZ projects**  
'Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SEDEP)' and 'EU4Innovation' in Albania

**Financing arrangements**  
BMZ contribution           255,000 EUR  
Berlin contribution        207,272 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 startup ecosystems Berlin, Sarajevo, and Tirana

### Local situation

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania are candidate countries for accession to the European Union (EU). In these two countries, as in the Western Balkans as a whole, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are hugely important to job creation and income generation. Startups and the innovation ecosystem are key factors in economic development. Despite high levels of labour migration, among the young and well trained people who have remained in Tirana and Sarajevo there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit. The growing start-up ecosystems in Sarajevo and Tirana are supported by state and municipal initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, exchange between science and industry, and investment programmes. This shows a strong political will to support economic transformation processes. Resources and networks that are available in more mature ecosystems such as Berlin are needed to promote and support start-ups even more effectively.

### Cooperation arrangements

The cooperation partner in the federal state of Berlin is the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises. The project cooperates at the local level with the GIZ projects 'Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SEDEP)' and 'EU4Innovation' in

*“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  
Mayor of Berlin and Berlin State Senator for  
Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises, Berlin



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Albania, and with their partner institutions. The main partner for implementing the BLP project in Albania is the Startup Albania Agency, which is part of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation (MEI). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the central implementation partner is the Ministry of Economy of Sarajevo Canton.

### What we are doing - and how

Berlin supports the international networking of startup ecosystems in the implementation of its innovation and internationalisation strategies. This is where the BLP project comes in, aiming to create and strengthen networks between the start-up ecosystems of Sarajevo, Tirana and Berlin, thereby contributing to the sustainable economic strengthening of the Western Balkans region. At the same time, this supports the two countries’ rapprochement with the EU market.

The capacities of actors from the start-up ecosystems of Tirana and Sarajevo to identify cooperation and business opportunities with actors from Berlin and the EU will be strengthened through exchange formats for economic development agencies, scholarships for start-ups and innovation support organisations (fellowships), and by strengthening cooperation across Europe’s innovation landscape, also with the aim of submitting a joint EU application. Networks promoting female entrepreneurship in Tirana and Sarajevo will also be supported. The project is sector agnostic, with a focus

on digital tech startups, paying particular attention on green business elements.

The project also aims to enhance the visibility of Sarajevo and Tirana regions in Berlin, thereby increasing their attractiveness for business connections and investment in those target regions. It also contributes to regional dialogue between the startup ecosystems in Tirana and Sarajevo.

### Useful links

- Further information on the BLP:  
<https://www.giz.de/en/projects/german-government-and-federal-states-programme-iii>  
<https://bund-laender-programm.de/en>
- Cooperating GIZ project in Bosnia and Herzegovina:  
<https://www.giz.de/en/projects/sustainable-economic-development-and-employment-promotion-bosnia-and-herzegovina>
- Cooperating GIZ project in Albania:  
<https://euforinnovation.al/>
- Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, Berlin:  
<https://www.berlin.de/sen/web/en/startups/>

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