



Participants of the programme on a workshop in Bonn (Germany)

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

Federal state - partner country

North Rhine-Westphalia -
North Macedonia, Kosovo



Title

Practical preparation of young managers for transformation processes in North Macedonia and Kosovo

In cooperation with the GIZ programme

Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe - Modernisation of Municipal Services

Financing arrangements

BMZ contribution 150.000 EUR
North Rhine-Westphalian contribution 300.000 EUR

Duration

01.07.2025 - 31.12.2026

Responsible ministry

State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

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



Young professionals as multipliers for reforms

Local situation

Kosovo and North Macedonia are both candidates for membership in the European Union. Sustainable reform processes are necessary in both countries in this regard. However, the necessary expertise for such reforms is often lacking. High youth unemployment and few perspectives for young graduates in future-oriented fields are a factor in this. Various aspects contribute to the latter, for example, highly theoretical study programmes with a lack of practical vocational preparation in the universities. Another challenge is the high percentage of informal employment in both countries, which affects women in particular and worsens the chances of integration into the formal labour market.

Nevertheless, there is a high demand for well-educated young professionals with international and practical work experience in both countries. With these initial conditions, it must be ensured that a project does not lead to a brain drain of well-educated young professionals towards EU member states.

Cooperation arrangements

The project builds on experiences and cooperation structures from a previous project. This involves close cooperation with the programme “Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe - Modernisation of Municipal Services”, which is implemented by GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

“Since North Macedonia is still considered a developing country, doing an internship in Germany was an amazing opportunity and a great experience. I was able to learn about the work ethic, about the local culture and do some networking. It will also contribute positively to the future urban development in my country.”

Bojana Vukovojac
Architect, participant of the programme



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Participant of the programme, during his internship at a construction planning company in Brandenburg

Implementation partners in North Macedonia are various universities, the Chamber of Commerce Abroad in Skopje and the Center for Research and Policy Making. In Kosovo, the University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina and the German-Kosovar Business Association are involved. On the German side, various institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), such as the Wuppertal Institute or the Bergische Abfallwirtschaftsverband (Bergisch Waste Management Association), are contributing their many years of cooperation experience with the region to the project.

What we are doing - and how

The core of the project is a professional training for 30 selected participants from North Macedonia and Kosovo. They initially participate in a two-month language course and a one-week seminar programme followed by a three- to six-month professional internship. Within this framework, they work in private and municipal companies in NRW and beyond, on future-oriented topics that are particularly relevant to the upcoming reform processes in North Macedonia and Kosovo.

Additionally, there is a continuous exchange between the participants and the alumni from the previous project. Three innovative alumni transfer projects in the areas of energy efficiency, healthcare and revitalisation of urban spaces are being supported within the framework of this project.

Furthermore, a University dialogue between the Cyril and Methodius University Skopje and the Bergische Universität Wuppertal and other universities in NRW with focus on the topic circular economy will be initiated. It will include an exchange about adjusting curricula to more practice-oriented contents, which will make it easier to access the job market. 80% of former participants have found an adequate job within one year after their participation. An integral part of all measures is the promotion of regional networking between participants from North Macedonia and Kosovo in order to contribute to the stabilisation of the region.

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>
- Further information on the Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe :
<https://www.giz.de/en/projects/orf>
- Partnership between North Rhine-Westphalia and North Macedonia (in German):
<https://mbeim.nrw/nordmazedonien>