

German-Chilean Steering Committee: Focus on sector groups

With the aim of taking stock of the past seven years and jointly defining the direction for the future, the first meeting of the German-Chilean steering committee of the *Partnering in Business with Germany* programme took place in Santiago de Chile on 21 November 2023. The bilateral committee agreed to include a broader range of companies and increase the number of Chilean companies in order to intensify cooperation.



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At the ministerial level, the German side was represented by Dr Christian Forwick, Head of the Division for Foreign Trade, Trade Policy and America at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and Ulrich Niemann, Head of the Division in the Department for Foreign Trade Policy responsible for the Programme. Ira Ronzheimer from the German Embassy, responsible for economic and scientific-technical cooperation, and Philip Bartsch, Deputy Managing Director of AHK Chile, also took part in the discussion.

The Chilean political partners were represented by Marisol Alarcon, Head of the Small Business Department at the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism (MINECON) and Carolina Gutierrez, responsible for international affairs in the department. Other participants on the Chilean side were Claudio Valenzuela, Head of the Networks and Territories Department at the foreign trade promotion agency CORFO, as well as the Programme's alumni.

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Dr. Forwick opened the meeting and emphasized that the economic situation in Germany requires structural reforms in times of a difficult global economic situation. *Partnering in Business with Germany* as a successful instrument of BMWK's foreign trade policy supports the Ministry's strategic priorities and flexibly adapts its services to new innovative topics and needs.



Visit to the VOENS company
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Ulrich Niemann added that the Programme is a successful instrument for promoting foreign trade, which has a short and long-term impact thanks to its unique selling points and the partners' shared willingness to take responsibility. The new external image of the Programme ensures clearer branding and international recognition. With the new name and a protected logo, the thematic focus is placed on business initiation – the presentation of success stories can support the desired proactive marketing.

The results of the bilateral work of *Partnering in Business with Germany* in Chile presented by the two implementing organizations CORFO and GIZ show the great value of the Programme for both sides. In the last seven years, 283 executives from Chile have participated in the Programme, with a high proportion of micro-enterprises. The participants come from the food industry, the information and communications sector, agriculture and forestry as well as the energy supply and circular economy sectors. At the meeting, it was emphasized that sector groups will play an increasingly important role in the coming years. They should be adapted to the needs and trends of both economies, and greater consideration should also be given to larger SMEs.

It also became clear that the newly founded network of former Programme participants, represented by Ms. María Inés Díaz, President of the ASOGICH alumni association, has made a good start in Chile. The alumni work serves the long-term networking with German economic institutions and the continuation of business relationships with German companies.

Two success stories were used to illustrate how the Programme ultimately works:



Valentina Varela at the specialist forum in Berlin ©GIZ/Jens Jeske



Lorena Santana at the alumni workshop in Berlin ©GIZ/Rolf Klatt

Valentina Varela from the company VOENS, which is active in the field of water treatment, signed contracts with the German companies GEH Wasserchemie and WATCHWATER as part of her participation in the Programme. She wants to offer German companies innovative solutions for water and wastewater treatment. Ms. Varela underlined the importance of the Programme for her company: “For us, environmentally friendly, strategic solutions make the difference. It was an excellent Programme to strengthen business relationships”.

Another alumna, Lorena Santana from Do! Smart City, signed a contract with the German company Babel Smart City in the field of communication technology. Through a license agreement (export) from Babel Smart City, the Chilean company is developing a platform that will accelerate networking between public institutions and Chilean companies for the development of urban transformation projects.

'Partnering in Business with Germany' is an instrument to promote foreign trade and investment by the



'Partnering in Business with Germany' is implemented on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action by

