Promotion of Alumni Networks

Numerous alumni from the programme's 17 partner countries came together at our recent alumni workshop as part of the event to mark the 25th anniversary of *Partnering in Business with Germany* in Berlin. During the workshop, alumni gained insights into the focal points of alumni work, which aims to promote business relations and establish alumni networks.

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Anne Jach-Kemps, Programme Manager of *Partnering in Business with Germany*, opened the workshop by highlighting the key objectives of alumni networks:

> The promotion of long-term business relationships between alumni and the German economy through access to an internal business network at SME level.
> National alumni networks as local (contact) partners for German companies. Promotion of self-supporting alumni networks in the partner countries and networking of alumni with local German businesses.
> Recruit alumni as multipliers and promoters of *Partnering in Business with Germany*. Alumni can pass on the knowledge and experience gained through their participation and thus contribute to the continuous development of the programme.

Information

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Coming up planned activities such as **expert forums** and **network promotion** with and for alumni are key to achieve these goals and enhance alumni networks. For example, experts of the German economy provide attractive offers in terms of networking with the German economy and qualifications of the alumni. Furthermore, the exclusive online network offers attractive country-specific digital networks as well as exchange between participants and alumni.

Apart from a short presentation on the perspective of the programme, there was much room for discussion and exchange. Alumni exchanged their motivation and expertise on the special features of alumni work in their country, as well as success stories and challenges. Further dialogue took place in three working groups on the following topics.

Cooperation between alumni and the German economy

Alumni discussed and exchanged knowledge on the potential and opportunity for cooperation between alumni networks and the German business community both in Germany and locally. Key questions centred around building self-supporting networks such as how one can institutionalise cooperation, what challenges entrepreneurs face, as well as what support alumni networks need when networking with the Germany

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business community in their home country. The benefits of networking became clear as in many cases this network has already made it possible to enter new markets in other alumni countries. The alumni have seen themselves as part of an international network and would like to cooperate regionally and globally. Several representatives of existing alumni networks have motivated other alumni to join forces and organize with their commitment because they were convinced that more could be achieved together.

Topics of cooperation with German companies

Furthermore, the second work group discussed topics relevant for cooperation with German companies regarding global challenges. “Sustainability”, “green tech”, “circular economy”, “energy efficiency” were just a few important topics mentioned to explore in greater depth. The alumni shared what current challenges they face in cooperation with German companies due to global challenges and how to best overcome these.

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Access to an international business network of alumni

The third working group dived deeper into topics relating to the development of the German economy in various sector and the potential of the international alumni network. All Alumni unanimously confirmed the great benefits of networking the programme’s (17,000) alumni with regard to the cooperation with German companies or with each other and their own development. Both an exclusive digital platform and face-to-face events would be useful for this.

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Partnering in Business with Germany

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