sequa gGmbH was an initiative of the German private sector. The non-profit company’s focus is on sustainable global development. Which explains why, almost two years ago, GIZ acquired a share in sequa.
Twenty years ago, Hanns-Eberhard Schleyer and Franz Schoser had the visionary idea of combining state development cooperation with business-sector institutions – in other words, with chambers and associations. At the time Schleyer was Secretary General of the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH), and Schoser Secretary General of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK). They set up a non-profit company – sequa gGmbH – which was to act as a hinge between development cooperation and the private economy. GIZ has owned a 49% stake in sequa* since 1 January 2010. With that, the original vision of the two founders is also now reflected in the company structure.

**Competence across four areas**

The founding organisations and GIZ are joined by the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations (BDA). As such, sequa represents 4.6 million German companies, 133 chambers, a large number of associations and over 800 supra-company educational institutions. The founders’ idea, with the help of German partners from this network, was to promote self-regulatory bodies in the private sector in developing countries and emerging economies, to train experts and managers there and to help improve living and working conditions for as many people as possible. sequa pools the required know-how from within its network and implements projects in the following four areas.

**The work of business chambers and associations**

Over the years, sequa has built a global reputation in the international cooperation market for its organisational development and performance improvements at chambers and associations. The company is the implementing agency for the Chamber and Associations Partnership Programme (KVP) funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

‘We use pooled know-how and tailor our projects precisely to the needs of our local partners,’ says Managing Director Gebhard Weiss. But the initiative for new projects comes directly from German chambers and associations looking to get involved in BMZ partner countries. For example, the Cologne chamber of trade and commerce is in contact with a chamber organisation in Burkina Faso that urgently wants to develop better organisational structures. Weiss explains the role played by sequa as follows: ‘We draft and present an application for BMZ support based on the project idea submitted by the Cologne chamber. Once it has

**KAZAKHSTAN**

**OPPORTUNITY FOR SMEs**

Kazakhstan’s aspiring small and medium-sized businesses need entrepreneurial know-how, but also political support. GIZ and sequa are helping to provide both.

Kazakhstan’s economic upturn is based on its expanding oil industry and abundance of natural resources. In the last 15 years, however, many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have also sprung up. For these operations, competition is growing steadily, as are the demands made on the organisation and marketing of products. Yet the country’s economic and institutional framework has until now been acting as a brake on their development.

As part of the Development of Business Support Structures project, sequa collaborated with GIZ to improve conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises in four pilot regions. With help from the project, for example, the companies organised preliminary interest groups. Chambers and associations were able to establish appropriate structures for their work. With the help of German economic experts, they developed appropriate services for small and medium-sized enterprises in Kazakhstan. This included support for start-up companies and foreign trade promotion. The Kazakh entrepreneurs took part in study tours in order to gain experience of the instruments used in Germany to promote the regional economy and to learn how dialogue between state and private sector is structured. In addition, sequa promoted a political exchange and cooperation between associations, entrepreneurs and politicians in Kazakhstan. At round table events, participants drew up proposals to improve policies for small and medium-sized companies. The success of these initiatives is clear to see: today, local chambers, associations and consulting companies are volunteering their services to small and medium-sized companies.

* Foundation for Economic Development and Vocational Training
A formal education is the best start to a successful future career. That’s why sequa and GIZ in Kyrgyzstan support the introduction of a binding training and examination system.

The Kyrgyz Government has set itself the objective of combating unemployment and developing vocational opportunities for young people in particular. If young people are to have a future, their training qualifications must be recognised by state vocational education institutions, the private sector and society. So on behalf of GIZ, sequa has been advising local partners such as the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration and the State Agency for Vocational Education and Training, the Chamber of Trade and Industry and vocational training institutions on the introduction of a certification model for vocational education since June 2011. In addition to examination regulations for initial vocational training, guidelines for examiners and trainees must be drawn up in order to give vocational education a binding structure. So that employers recognise the qualifications, the project directly involves local businesses in the process. In future, they will also take part in examining trainees. sequa experts also draw up regulations for the skilled workers’ examinations in such a way as to make them comprehensible and transparent for employers.

Through all these measures, sequa supports the state body for accreditation and certification of vocational education, developed by GIZ in a programme geared to vocational training and employment promotion. This involves representatives of the government, the private sector and civil society and is tasked with safeguarding the management quality of vocational schools and the relevant examination system. To this end, GIZ and its partners are developing standardised procedures and methods in line with European models. sequa is responsible for the aspects of certification procedures and examination regulations.

School graduates with recognised vocational qualifications have a much better chance of finding a job that corresponds to their training and requirements.