

About GIZ

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The ProSME programme aims at increasing the competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) with focus on innovation and entrepreneurship promotion. It is implemented by the Albanian Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Entrepreneurship (MEDTE) as well as GIZ on behalf of the German Government.

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If you want to go fast, go alone,
If you want to go far, go together
Nucleus Albania



Introduction

MSMEs and farmers, who account for the majority in Albanian business, lack knowledge, know-how and experience regarding national and international markets, competition and product standards. They suffer from the absence of institutional support by the public and private sector, which is available to the urban and rural enterprises in the established market economies.

The entrepreneur acts in isolation within his or her enterprise; they never get to up-grade their skills systematically or to learn “how to learn”.

They consider other entrepreneurs from the same sector not only as competitors but even as personal enemies - with whom they can neither exchange know-how and experience nor cooperate.

They deeply distrust the government as well as promoting institutions, suppliers, customers and even colleagues.

GIZ as a strategic partner supports the newly founded “Nucleus Albania” Association, its governance and management structure, focusing on the promotion of the MSME Nucleus Methodology and on quality assurance.

Approach

The Nucleus Approach addresses the MSMEs of a sector, creating a working group called “nucleus” that is facilitated by a Nucleus business counsellor. The group is hosted by an association or chamber. This integral approach stimulates change at firm level as well as at that of associations or chambers.

The Nucleus Approach creates an organisational platform where entrepreneurs may start to open up, to identify individual and common problems, to compare their performance with others (benchmarking), to define their own demand for services, to develop self-confidence and to improve their enterprises.

The Nucleus Approach evokes organizational change also in the hosting business association or chamber by

- providing group counselling for Nucleus members (entrepreneurs help entrepreneurs);
- identifying the entrepreneurs’ subjectively perceived problems; looking for solutions within the group, and starting common activities in order to address problems.

Results and benefits

The MSME Nucleus Approach was introduced in Albania in 2013 as a one year pilot project; it is included in the National Business Investment Strategy 2014-2020, as an instrument for MSME development.



To date,

- “Nucleus Albania” is an NGO, founded in September 2014 by five Albanian private business associations, representing tourism / hotels, olive oil production, horticulture, livestock, and professional business women. “Nucleus Albania” aims to support MSMEs, by strengthening their cooperation, implementing the MSME Nucleus approach, and improving MSME business services via a national network and information sharing platform.
- Two umbrella business organisations, Biznes Albania and KASH, as well as GIZ are members of the advisory council and act as strategic guides to “Nucleus Albania”.
- About 130 owners of MSMEs are members of 14 nuclei: hotel and restaurant owners, olive farmers and olive oil producers, livestock farmers and honey producers, carpenters, hairdressers, and artisans.
- 28 persons were trained as nucleus business counsellors, out of which some have been accredited;

Different joint activities have been organized;

- 15 olive oil producers and 10 olive farmers organized a joint promotion in commercial chain stores, such as CONAD; and jointly purchased new technical equipment;
- 10 hotel owners in Tirana gained international expertise for improving their services, participated at the Pristine Tourism Fair, and organized a B2B meeting in Vlorë in order to share experiences among themselves.

Way Ahead:

“Nucleus Albania” will ensure the quality of services rendered and be the ‘house-keeper’ of Nucleus principles. At national level, it will monitor Nucleus groups’ performance, i.e. activities, indicators, results, and the overall institutionalization process in Albania.