



National Agency for Women Start-Up Activities and Services (BGA), Germany

What?

The *bundesweite gründerinnenagentur* (BGA) is a federal agency that acts as a Germany-wide one-stop shop for information and support services for women entrepreneurs. Its objectives are to (i) gather information and offer female-specific support services in all sectors and at all stages of business development; (ii) develop women's entrepreneurship networks; (iii) promote women's entrepreneurship role models; and (iv) promote an entrepreneurial culture among women and society.

Why?

Women entrepreneurship is characterised by a number of distinct features in terms of approach and motivation, career pathways, access to financial capital, business objectives and more. As a result, standard public policy to support entrepreneurs may not always match well with the needs of women entrepreneurs. In addition, women entrepreneurs often face specific challenges such as a shortage of assistance for child and parental care.

Key activities

As the unique national skill and service centre for women entrepreneurship, the BGA develops and offers a broad range of activities and services specially designed to support women entrepreneurs, including the provision of information, consulting, mentoring and coaching services, opportunities to develop networks and entrepreneurship training. BGA's comprehensive web portal is the central exchange and information platform. It contains three national databases of women-specific advisory service providers (more than 500 registered), experts for women-specific consultancy (approximately 1 200), and women entrepreneurs' networks and business centres (more than 300). In addition, the online events calendar includes approximately 400 training courses and events per year (e.g. congresses, trade fairs). The head office is located in Stuttgart and it undertakes a steering and co-ordinating function, as well as offering centralised information and advisory services. Regional offices have been established in all 16 German Federal States. They develop and co-ordinate support activities for women entrepreneurship at the state level and act as contact points for local and regional actors. Overall BGA has built up a network of more than 2 000 partners, including specialised consultants, women entrepreneurs, women entrepreneur business centres, and government and business institutions supporting women entrepreneurs.

Impact

BGA is generally accepted as the leading voice and central policy and co-ordinating unit for women entrepreneurship. The organisational structure also acts as a very efficient communication channel both for developing new programmes and for gathering data on specific needs. BGA's impact on the number of female entrepreneurs cannot easily be assessed, since start-up activities are influenced by many different factors. However, it has achieved a wide reach since its inception: 21 million website visits, 260 000 printed copies of BGA's 40 publications, 6 000 initial counselling and consulting sessions, 5 300 media reports on BGA, and 1 700 events organised and conducted by BGA.

*This case study was adapted from material published in: OECD/European Union (2015), *The Missing Entrepreneurs 2015: Policies for Self-employment and Entrepreneurship*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226418-en> [1]*

Source URL: <https://betterentrepreneurship.eu/en/content/national-agency-women-start-activities-and-services-bga-germany>

Links

[1] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264226418-en>