

"Fit for Partnership with Germany"

The Manager Training Programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMW)

As an element of German foreign trade policy, the Manager Training Programme (MP) prepares managers from [21 current partner countries](#) for building business contacts and cooperating with German companies. Over 15,000 executives have completed the programme so far. In the wake of pandemic-related travel restrictions, the MP went online in 2020. As of 2022, the MP will be offered in an enhanced format that combines the advantages of distance learning with traditional classroom methods to optimally prepare participants to work with the German private sector.

A social blended learning concept maximises business success

Starting in 2022, the programme format will incorporate online and in-person units (blended learning). Group learning, tandem partners and a variety of coaching techniques will create an environment of mutual learning and exchange and foster active skills development (social learning). Specially designed for this new format, the "MP Campus" digital learning and communication platform will host online training modules, allow participants to communicate with one other, and help the German training centres provide guidance throughout the learning process. The interplay between online and in-person instruction culminates in a two-week stay in Germany, where participants establish personal contact to the German business community. Each programme involves a group of around 20 managers and is divided into three phases plus a final networking event in the home country:

Phase 1: Onboarding

The two-week introductory phase sets the technical and organisational foundation needed to ensure the programme runs smoothly, clarifies the expectations of participants, and provides an overview of programme content. A **virtual onboarding** and tour of the ["MP Campus"](#) platform introduces participants to the programme. A two-day **introductory workshop** in the home country follows, where participants get to know each other and the respective German training centre. In conversation, the group learns what to expect from the programme in terms of content and scheduling, but also their role in the learning process, the educational support provided by the training centre, and the desired results. Here the focus is on exchange, and participating managers share their opinions and experience, talk about the challenges they face in their everyday work, and discuss their personal and corporate objectives. Each participant is required to complete an individual cooperation project detailing these personal ideas and goals, which are assessed for feasibility and refined.

Additionally, participants begin exploring some of the issues relevant to building business contacts with Germany (e.g. business location Germany, finding German business partners, intercultural management). **Encouraging participants to get to know one another in the group** is one focus of this phase and is essential to building learning communities and working together on a basis of trust. Local implementing partners also coordinate a preparatory course on the economic relations between the respective partner country and Germany.

Phase 2: Training phase

This phase is designed as an interplay of different learning units: interactive and practice-oriented training courses, thematic business in practice visits, and individual meetings with German companies (B2Bs). The knowledge developed here is transformed into an active skillset participants can apply in their day-to-day work and cooperation with German companies.

Phase 2 starts with a six-week online unit and ends with a live unit, the two-week **stay in Germany** and the core of the **programme**. In the online portion, knowledge transfer primarily takes place in courses as participants prepare to initiate business contacts in parallel, while **live training in Germany** focuses on direct experience with the Germany economy. As a group, participants interact with German firms in **thematic business in practice visits**. Participating executives also meet one-on-one with potential business partners in **B2B meetings**, an opportunity to gather first-hand, practical knowledge from German entrepreneurs while learning about the modern technology and equipment on site and experiencing other elements of German corporate culture, such as the work atmosphere and communication among superiors and employees.

Parallel to the group programme, participants take part in four **individual meetings with German companies (B2Bs)**, two online and two during their stay in Germany. These are a chance for foreign managers to apply the active skills acquired in the MP to a real-life situation and elicit interest in cooperation from both sides. Visits to German trade fairs can be integrated into the programme as well.

Phase 3: Implementation of cooperation objectives

During the **six-month implementation phase**, participants work on realising their cooperation projects and initiating change processes in their home companies. The training centres use the “MP Campus” platform to foster the ongoing and lively exchange of knowledge and experience among participants. Managers meet once a month on “MP Campus” to reflect on issues and discuss open questions with the German training centre. Current problems can be addressed in **peer and co-active coaching** within the group. Additional training units in areas like innovation and change management round off this phase. All these accompanying measures assist participants in implementing **cooperation projects and changes in their home companies**. The implementation phase, and thus the programme as a whole, ends with an **evaluation** of the results.

Networking event

A **two-day networking event** is held in participants' home country shortly after the programme has ended. The event is an opportunity for graduates to establish contact with other MP alumni (from previous years as well), provide personal feedback on programme participation, and talk about the results of cooperation and change projects. The meeting ends with a ceremonial handover of the **participation certificates**. Representatives of German embassies, German chambers of commerce, partner organisations and local alumni networks are invited to attend and facilitate alumni's integration into existing **alumni networks**.