

AGREEMENT

of the Start-Up Centres or structurally comparable Facilities
of Partner and Affiliated Towns
of the City of Mannheim for the

“International Desk” Exchange Programme

as part of the Conference of Partner and Affiliated Towns of the City of
Mannheim

„Städtepartnerschaften im 21. Jahrhundert:
Wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Zusammenarbeit“,
[“Town Twinings in the 21st Century:
Economic and Cultural Cooperation”]

Mannheim, 12th - 15th July 2011

Preamble

The undersigned partners hereby agree to set up an “International Desk” as part of an exchange programme between partner and affiliated towns of the city of Mannheim, including the relevant support and consultation services.

The programme shall provide office space within the start-up centres or structurally comparable facilities of the partners, together with technical infrastructure for small and medium-sized enterprises (see SME criteria of the EU Commission) from the partner and affiliated towns for a period of a max. three months. The local partners shall support the “guest companies” in the search for contacts and networking within the local structures and in overcoming administrative hurdles to make it easier to enter the international market. This cooperation should be implemented in the good spirit of mutual understanding and cooperative action, against a background of economic cooperation.

1. Objective

The objective of the “International Desk” programme is to initiate, expand and strengthen the international exchange of companies, economic potential, innovation, knowledge and networks between the involved partners. In particular, the market entry of the companies participating in this programme should be encouraged and supported in the partner regions. Consequently, far-reaching and close cooperation is strived for between the partners. A special focus should lie in the support of companies led by women.

2. Partners

The following partners shall be involved in the “International Desk” programme:

Qingdao // Creative 100 Industrial Park

Haifa // HiCenter

Bygdoszcz // Business Academic Area / University of Economic in Bygdoszcz

Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf // CHIC // UCW

Zhenjiang // High Tech Start-Up-Park

Mannheim // mg: mannheimer gründungszentren gmbh

Mannheim // gig7

Riesa // ZTS – Zentrum für Technologieentwicklung

Klaipeda // Klaipeda Science and Technology Park

Swansea // Boots Centre for Innovation (Institute of Life Science – ILS)

3. Services for the Guest Companies

The provision of the infrastructural and advisory support services listed below for the guest companies is predominantly the responsibility of the relevant partner centre or a structurally comparable facility. This centre / facility is in charge of creating the relevant infrastructure and coordinating contacts, which are tailored to the individual requirements of the guest company. The costs, which are charged to the guest company, should be kept as low as possible. The advisory support services should be provided free of charge and considered as a contribution to mutual cooperation and exchange between the partner and affiliated towns.

3.1 Infrastructural Services

As part of the “International Desk” programme, the following infrastructural services shall be provided by the partners:

- Adequate office space, if possible within the participating start-up centre or a comparably structured facility or in the proximity of the supporting facility / partner
- Office equipment for one to two workstations (desks, office chairs, cabinet, etc.)
- Internet connection, possibly printer / scanner

3.2 Advisory Services

As part of the “International Desk” programme, the following networking and advisory services shall be provided by the partners:

- Individual support in administrative issues concerning the stay (see, for example, right of residence, trade law, visa). The relevant country-specific legal conditions (EU countries / non-EU countries) must be taken into account
- Support in the search for accommodation for the duration of the stay
- Networking and initiation of contacts with players from the regional economy and universities
- Consultation and support in overcoming administrative hurdles concerning the regional / international market entry
- Intercultural consultation with economic reference

4. Implementation

The “International Desk” programme shall provide support for micro enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises from the start-up centres or structurally comparable facilities of the partner and affiliated towns of the city of Mannheim.

In principle, all partners can exchange information with one another.

The selection of companies to be supported is made by the partners of the city / the centre, from which the SME being supported originates, in agreement with the relevant destination partner.

The country-specific regulations with regards visa, right of residence and trade law / obligation of disclosure should be clarified in good time in the individual case. The relevant planning must be carried out with the necessary lead time.

Should the start-up centres or structurally comparable facilities be subject to funding or legal conditions, these must be taken into account during the selection of companies.

The supported companies can enlist the services of an “International Desk” for a maximum of three months per partner. However, a stay should not be shorter than one month.

The availability of the space depends on its occupation. If applicable, alternative accommodation or waiting times must be accepted.

The supported SME shall receive a rental agreement on-site, taking into account the aforementioned services. Operating costs can be charged for as a flat rate.

