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Project “Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in
Reconstruction and Development: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions”
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Case Study

Community of Bridging Managers: How Global Ukrainian Community Connects Germany and Ukraine for Sustainable Economic Relationships and Reconstruction

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Introduction and background information

The World Bank estimates that Ukraine will need at least \$486 billion over the next ten years to rebuild its destroyed infrastructure (including about \$68 billion for trade and industry, \$82.6 billion for housing, and \$58.32 billion for agriculture).¹ Support for the Ukrainian economy is crucial for the country's reconstruction. It is clear that current foreign financial assistance, such as the Ukraine Facility's share of grants and loans totaling EUR 39 billion to support recovery, reconstruction, modernization, and reforms for EU accession,² will not be enough, despite ensuring Ukraine's economic survival for now. Ukraine's reconstruction will rely heavily on private investment, support from non-state actors, and innovative solutions. The global Ukrainian diaspora offers significant potential for contributing across different sectors of the economy, considering that the security issue is an indispensable part of the recovery process. This requires taking into consideration all dimensions of recovery: human, local, business, and EU. Drawing on the expertise of the global Ukrainian community, including business experts, and using existing networks are key.

Problem description

The challenge lies in the fact that the potential for systemic involvement of the Ukrainian diaspora and the involvement of specialist expertise in detail remains largely untapped. Diaspora engagement is sporadic, there is a lack of diverse formats and adequate infrastructure for diaspora investment, and discussions are often confined to specialized circles. In order to meet the challenges and properly channel the global diaspora's potential, new formats and projects are needed to create a systematic and professional network of expertise that links the global community and their respective countries.

Community of Bridging Managers: rebuilding economic relationships with Ukraine

Community of Bridging Managers (CBM) is a part of the global Ukrainian community (GUC). CBM was founded by the alumni network of the project "Special Initiative Ukraine of the Manager Training Programme" from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection in Germany (BMWK), implemented by GIZ.³ The project focuses on the essential role of qualified managers in Ukraine's reconstruction and its path towards EU integration. BMWK's Special Initiative Ukraine offers

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/uk/news/press-release/2024/02/15/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released>

² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/753954/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)753954_DE.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/753954/EPRS_BRI(2023)753954_DE.pdf)

³ <https://partnering-in-business.de/news/erfolgreicher-start-der-sonderinitiative-ukraine/>

German companies the opportunity to collaborate with Ukrainian executives who have fled the Russian invasion of Ukraine to Germany and who, in turn, are offered the opportunity to work in German companies. All participants bring extensive professional and managerial experience across diverse domains, including marketing and communication, sales, IT software development, business project development, law, architecture, and human resource management. The programme lasts eleven weeks and is divided into three main phases. The initial preparation week includes tailored training and education, followed by eight weeks of individual work shadowing in German companies to gain insights into business practices and establish long-term contacts. The final two weeks focus on reflection and consolidation of acquired knowledge, with additional training to deepen management and cooperation skills.⁴

From both Ukrainian and German perspectives, this programme is a great opportunity to gain insights into corporate culture, exchange ideas on an equal footing, expand networks, and develop own or joint projects for the economic reconstruction of Ukraine.⁵

CBM is linked to outcomes from the programme and specializes in fostering strong business relationships between German and Ukrainian companies, and is dedicated to helping businesses succeed in both markets through specialized trade and promotion services.⁶ By leveraging the expertise of its members, CBM aims to create opportunities for growth, innovation, and collaboration, and to serve as a key platform for mutual benefit and sustainable value creation for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ukraine.⁷

CBM's focus is on creating synergies between Germany and Ukraine with tailor-made solutions that are effective and culturally nuanced. It is precisely this point that often plays an important unifying role and is one of the great potentials of the GUC. Whether it is exporting products, setting up a subsidiary, or entering into strategic alliances, CBM supports every step of the way with expertise and an established network in both countries.⁸

The following services have been defined by the CBM as key to strengthening economic relations:

- **Trade missions inbound and outbound:** Facilitating international market exposure with targeted trade missions designed to create meaningful business connections.
- **Export promotion projects, trade desks, and representations:** Providing comprehensive support to expand market reach, including setting up trade desks and managing representations.
- **Business partner searches and matchmaking:** Offering personalized matchmaking services to find reliable business partners, tailored to specific industry needs.
- **Trade show and events:** Maximizing visibility and networking opportunities through meticulously planned trade shows and events.
- **Cluster- and industry-specific cooperation:** Building strategic alliances within industry clusters to enhance innovation and competitive advantage.
- **Seminars and workshops:** Educating and empowering businesses with the latest market insights and best practices through interactive sessions.⁹

Through its established connections with over 500 companies via Ukraine's cluster organizations such as the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance,¹⁰ an association of Ukrainian organizations for cluster movement development and economic growth, CBM has developed a robust network essential for accelerating business growth and promoting innovation. Collaborations with prominent entities like Berlin Partner,¹¹ a public-private partnership that promotes business and technology in the state of Berlin, and the German Eastern Business Association¹² enhance their capacity in business development and investment within significant European economic centers. Furthermore, partnerships with Composites

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://bridge-ua.com/what-we-do/trade-export/>

⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bridging-managers/?originalSubdomain=de>

⁸ <https://bridge-ua.com/what-we-do/trade-export/>

⁹ <https://bridge-ua.com/what-we-do/trade-export/>

¹⁰ <https://www.clusters.org.ua/en/home-page/>

¹¹ <https://www.berlin-partner.de/en>

¹² <https://www.ost-ausschuss.de/de/german-eastern-business-association>



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United,¹³ one of the world's largest networks specializing in fiber-based multi-material lightweight design, highlight CBM's dedication to innovation by leveraging expertise in composite materials. These strategic alliances underscore CBM's commitment to delivering comprehensive support and ensuring businesses access optimal opportunities across various industries and regions.

Conclusions

CBM is a good example of how the expertise of the GUC can be channeled in a specific direction and how a group formed during a BMWK project successfully sustained itself beyond the initial endeavor, establishing an alumni network capable of providing tangible support.

Both BMWK's project and the resulting CBM initiative demonstrate successful cooperation between the state, society, and the diaspora community. This case can be seen as an example of how to solve complex reconstruction problems and can be replicated in other countries. Expanding the scope of this project and integrating its expertise into the global exchange of the GUC can enhance cross-sectoral approaches and foster sustainable connections. Securing financial backing for initiatives like CBM is crucial to establishing a sustainable framework for their work.

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1. **Quoting/referencing:** Pryhornytska, Nataliya. 2024. „Community of Bridging Managers: How Global Ukrainian Community Connects Germany and Ukraine for Sustainable Economic Relationships and Reconstruction,” Research England Policy Support Fund Grant "Engaging the Ukrainian Diaspora in Reconstruction and Development: Democracy and Human Rights Dimensions," University of Warwick.

And

2. If you intend to use the case study in policy development or it informs your thinking or practice please **contact the PI of the project**, Prof. M. Koinova at m.koinova@warwick.ac.uk **and the author**, Nataliya Pryhornytska, at nataliya.pryhornytska@ukr-alliance.de

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¹³ <https://composites-united.com/en/about-us/>