# **Business Services in Germany**

Customer Contact - Shared Services - Business Process Outsourcing

Issue 2011/2012





# Your European Service Gateway

The business services industry has been growing in the double-digit percentage range for years. Germany is one of the biggest contact center (CC), shared service center (SSC) and business process outsourcing (BPO) industry growth markets in Europe. More and more domestic companies and global players located in Germany are taking advantage of innovative CC, SSC and BPO concepts to optimize their front-, back-office and non-core functions. A rising number of companies are choosing to locate in Germany as the country increases in attractiveness thanks to moderate wage cost developments and low

Portugal

Lisbon

Dublin

Madrid

Spain

labor fluctuation rates. International outsourcers are also taking advantage of sites in Germany in order to deliver services and meet the high quality and data security requirements of their customers. Home to a large and culturally diverse labor pool of highly qualified and motivated people with international work experience and foreign language ability, Germany is an excellent location for

pan-European and other international projects. Optimal infrastructure, high productivity rates and stable wage levels make Germany an extremely attractive service sector location.



# The Industry at a Glance

## Front Office

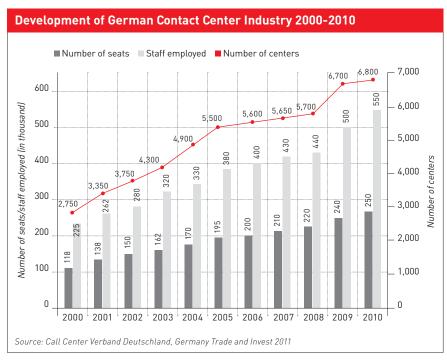
With nearly 6,800 contact centers and more than half a million employees in 2010, the industry has attained considerable significance in Germany. Over 50 percent of contact center services are active in financial services, telecommunication and IT.

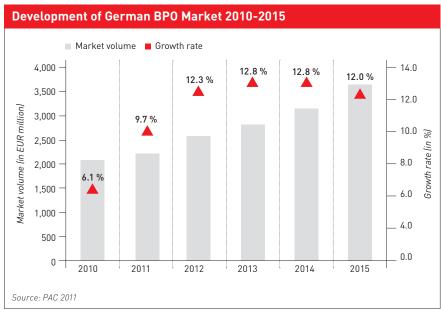
Since the mid-nineties, the contact center industry has been growing at a rate of 10 percent per year. An increase of 100,000 employees is expected over the next five years. Contact center industry turnover amounted to more than EUR 14 billion in 2010.

## Back Office

Around 75 percent of large German companies have already installed SSCs. The BPO market in Germany is highly fragmented, with the top 20 BPO providers occupying less than 30 percent market share. Front-office and middle-office services currently dominate the market, with back-office services forecast to record the largest growth potential.

German companies plan to establish further SSCs across the country. Key development drivers are the ready availability of qualified personnel, stable labor costs and low labor turnover rates. According to PAC, the German BPO market will grow by 9.7 percent in 2011. This development will be led especially by finance & accounting processes [15.8 percent estimated growth] and procurement (14.8 percent).





By 2015, the BPO market in Germany is expected to have reached an estimated volume of EUR 3.6 billion. German global players including BASF, Bayer, Daimler, Heidelberg Cement, and Merck run captive SSCs in Germany that cover their international business activities.

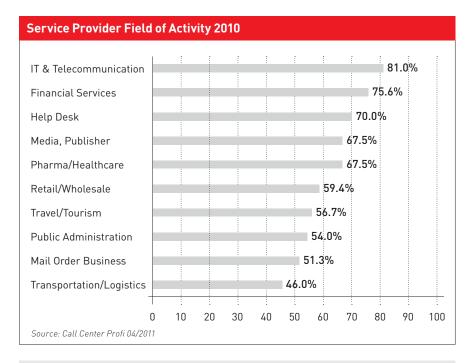
A number of international BPO providers are also active in Germany. Global players including ADP, HP, Paychex, and TCS operate their own BPO delivery centers in Germany.

# **Advantages**

Nearly 100 million strong, the German-speaking market is the largest in Europe. The market includes not only Germany, but also Austria, most of Switzerland, and parts of northern Italy. These four countries are some of the wealthiest in Europe, with sophisticated infrastructures and strong consumer markets. An investment in a German contact center enables efficient and optimal access to Europe's largest language market. Moreover, many Germans speak at least one foreign language (most often English), offering investors the opportunity to expand their contact center's international reach from a German location.

# **Opportunities**

Insurance companies and banks use contact centers to carry out their customer support services. Thanks to increased know-how and years of experience, more and more inhouse contact centers are following the trend to provide services on the open market. External service providers have large growth prospects; mainly due to the increasing demand for quality and high-value services. The health care industry also has significant prospects. These include the pharmaceutical industry, medical technology, and health care services. All of these industry sectors are benefiting from improved health care concepts and an aging population. These societal changes have helped create a number of entirely new business models including, for example, telephone care for the chronically ill. Germany's market for business-to-business services rivals the largest in Europe.



# Key sourcing location drivers include:

- 1. Labor and labor development costs
- 2. Availability of qualified and motivated staff (linguistic and technical skills)
- 3. Labor attrition rates
- 4. Attractiveness of the location (also for international talent)
- 5. Real estate (availability and cost)
- 6. IT and physical infrastructure
- 7. Location accessibility (providing quick and easy local access to employees and international transport infrastructure)
- 8. Political stability
- 9. Taxation
- 10. Incentives

World renowned for its vibrant *Mittelstand* of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Germany provides a solid foundation for SMEs to expand their client base. There are approximately 3.62 million small and medium-sized businesses - including some of the world's leading companies – in Germany.

In the Safe Information Group established its German branch office in Berlin in 2010. The online provider of credit ratings, company information, and data on financing, human resources and marketing has expanded rapidly across Europe since its inception in Norway in 1997. The Berlin office, set to staff approximately 100 employees, broadens The Safe Information Group's presence to seven European countries.

# Best Practice Example: Front Office

## Sitel

## **Company Background**

Sitel is a world leader in outsourced customer care services. Sitel's 52,000 employees provide clients with predictable and measurable return on their customer investment by building customer loyalty, increasing sales and improving efficiency. Sitel's solutions span over 135 domestic, nearshore, and offshore centers in 26 countries across North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia Pacific.

#### German Expansion

Sitel has been active in Germany since 1996. The company currently operates seven sites in six cities employing approximately three thousand employees. The German delivery centers are part of Sitel's pan-EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) and multi-site strategy with multilingual support and allow customer support in the German language using native speakers. Optimal customer service demands that native speakers be employed in numbers appropriate to the level of service delivered. Sitel's German operations are set up as multichannel centers. This means that services can be provided with the help of all relevant media.

"Sitel's German clients expect the same quality from their outsource vendor as they themselves provide to their customers. Well-trained and reliable employees are needed in order to safeguard this quality. From a quality and recruitment perspective, Germany remains one of the most interesting locations in Europe. That is why we are planning to continue our expansion in Germany."



# Why Germany?

Germany is Europe's largest market. Excellently trained staff and quality requirements intrinsic to Germany can best serve Europe's most populous country. Due to Germany's urban diversity, multilingual support combined with employee reliability and competitively stable wages renders Germany an excellent European location for business service operations.

# German Excellence: Convincing through Quality

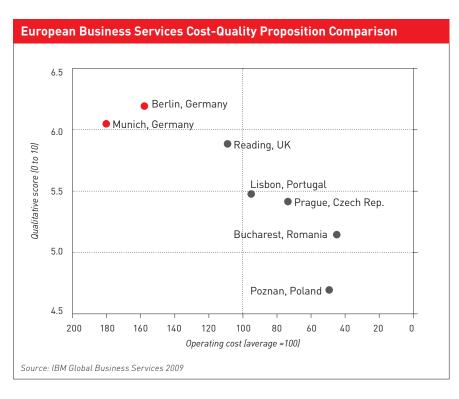
Shared service centers and business process outsourcing allow companies to concentrate on their core businesses and run their non-core activities in a professional and effective manner. Administrative functions are being bundled and centralized – be it captive or outsourced. Thanks to optimized concentration, processes can be standardized and automated in order to achieve higher proficiency levels through economies of scale.

#### Germany's Key Advantages

Germany meets all of the major requirements of the international sourcing industry. Thanks to the presence of a highly qualified workforce, integrated processes can easily be implemented within the centers. Accordingly, the units in Germany achieve a higher level of standardization and operate more efficiently. Labor turnover rates of around five to ten percent are significantly lower than in near or offshore locations. Labor costs remain stable; with higher salary levels adequately compensated by more effective work flow systems and increased productivity.

## Striking the Right Cost-Performance Balance

Germany provides a high quality proposition. The "Made in Germany" quality seal continues to be a benchmark of excellence recognized the world over. And not only in traditional heavy industries, but also in the country's thriving service sector where highly trained personnel are helping consolidate the country's deserved reputation as an international center of service excellence.



Moreover, the cost-quality proposition offered by German towns and cities is significantly better than that of similar locations in pan-European comparison.

#### **Proven Quality**

The findings of the IBM Global Business Services' Global Location Trends Report demonstrate that German cities have the highest costs but also the highest quality operating environment. Increasingly more German companies are taking advantage of business service operations located in Germany.

BASF has established its European Shared Service Center in Berlin. With approximately 1,000 employees from 45 nations, it delivers F&A and HR services for more than 180 companies in the BASF group from over 25 countries in Europe. The establishment of the shared services center in Berlin was made possible thanks to specially negotiated collective agreements.

### **Leading Market**

One of the world's export champions, Germany is also Europe's leading economy and the third largest economy worldwide (with GDP of EUR 2.5 trillion) after the USA and Japan respectively. In fact, German GDP accounts for around 20 percent of total EU-27 GDP. Germany is also Europe's largest consumer market with more than 82 million inhabitants. German as well as international companies are enjoying the considerable benefits Germany has to offer for business services. German locations are helping globally active companies meet their international, non-transactional services requirements with the help of a multilingual workforce with international work experience. A significant German back-office specialist base helps service the large domestic market. The size of the domestic market is such that the German component constitutes the largest part of many EMEA projects.

PAREXEL International, a leading global biopharmaceutical services provider, has 71 locations in 50 countries, including major biopharmaceutical centers such as Berlin. In addition to comprehensive clinical research operations in Berlin, PAREXEL operates one of its global financial shared services centers, which provides supporting services to other offices in over 15 European countries. PAREXEL's global operations, such as its financial shared service center, benefit from several advantages in the Berlin area, including a combination of low turnover rates, affordable office space, and a broad range of available language skills.

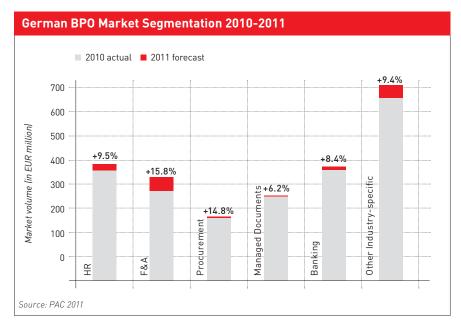
#### **Strong Domestic Demand**

As well as industrial giants like Daimler, SAP, Siemens, Bayer, and BASF, the German economy is also home to a thriving small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. In fact, over three million SMEs employ 80 percent of the German labor force. These SMEs are typically innovative family-owned businesses; often operating from locations both within and outside Germany. They typically have small on-site F&A and HR units, but not of a size that would warrant the establishment of a captive SSC. These companies represent the most significant market potential in terms of non-core process outsourcing.

#### **BPO Market Potential in Germany**

According to PAC, one of the leading BPO analysts, the BPO market in Germany will grow by 9.7 percent in 2011. The highest growth is estimated in the areas of finance & accounting (15.8 percent) as well as procurement (14.8 percent).

Industries and Processes with Highest Growth Prospects within the German BPO Market				
Industries	Processes			
<ul> <li>Utilities</li> <li>Manufacturing         (esp. pharmaceuticals,         CPG, high-tech/electronics)</li> <li>Financial Services         (banking &amp; insurance)</li> </ul>	■ Finance & Accounting ■ Procurement ■ Industry-specific processes (e.g. smart metering for utilities, policy management for insurance, clinical data management for pharmaceuticals, loyalty card processing for retailers/airlines et.al.)			
Source: PAC 2011				



Industry analysts report significant BPO market potential for a wide range of processes in a number of industries. According to PAC, the industries and processes outlined in the table above have the greatest BPO potential within the German market.

▶ Hewlett-Packard (HP) expanded into the German BPO market by acquiring German company SCHOTT's financial SSC. This provides onshore BPO services for the German market. HP established its German F&A BPO services delivery center in northern Bavaria, close to the Czech border. While offering BPO services from a local center, HP also enjoys a competitive advantage over international BPO providers who deliver from offshore location using non-native speakers.

# Best Practice Example: Back Office

## ADP

#### **Company Background**

Automatic Data Processing, Inc., (ADP) is one of the world's largest providers of business outsourcing solutions. With nearly USD 9 billion in revenue and over 570,000 clients, ADP has secured 15.5 percent share of the global HR business process outsourcing market. Leveraging over 60 years of experience, ADP offers a diverse range of HR, payroll, tax, and benefits administration solutions from a single source.

#### **European Expansions**

Founded in 1949 in the US, the company began its European expansion in 1995 with the opening of its European headquarters in Paris, France, and a German branch office in Neu-Isenburg near Frankfurt. Within Germany, ADP concentrates on HR solutions, payroll and travel services. ADP currently performs 2.5 million postings per year. Apart from application hosting, complete business processes can be outsourced to ADP. One in every five payrolls in Germany is produced using ADP products and services. ADP's easy-to-use solutions for employers provide superior value to companies of all types and sizes.

### **Counting on Quality**

With growing market presence in Germany and increased demand for quality services, ADP added to its existing operations in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Bremen with the opening of a BPO site in Dresden. Today it employs around 140 customer service representatives who deliver world class



"We decided on a location in Germany because of its labor market. People are well-trained thanks to the special German system of 'dual professional education.' Therefore, we do not need to hire graduates as with other nearshore locations, but have access to a large and highly qualified labor pool. Here in Dresden, we find motivated people with high loyalty levels and all of the necessary qualifications at a moderate wage level. It really worked out for us."

service on a daily basis. ADP selected Dresden, capital city of the federal state of Saxony in the southeast of Germany, because of its optimal fit to its resource requirements.

# Highly Skilled and Flexible Workforce

One of the key drivers for the establishment of business centers is the labor market: the available labor pool, highly qualified staff, technical and language skills, moderate wage growth levels, and low attrition rates.

Germany constitutes the largest labor pool within the European Union (EU). Sixty-three percent of Germany's 82 million inhabitants (around 52 million people) are of working age (18-64 years old). Eighty-one percent of the German population have been trained to university entrance level or possess a recognized vocational qualification - above the OECD average of 71 percent. Germany provides direct access to a highly qualified and flexible labor pool to meet industry needs whilst ensuring that skilled workers are well prepared for the workplace.

## Germany's Dual Education System

Germany's dual education system – unique in combining the benefits of classroom-based and on-the-job training over a period of two to three years – is specifically geared to meet industry needs. The German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) ensure that exacting standards are adhered to, guaranteeing the quality of training provided across Germany. The country's dual vocational training system allows 60 percent of young people to put their first foot on the career ladder.

Companies have access to a wealth of highly trained and motivated talent at market-competitive conditions. Approximately 300,000 young professionals successfully take their German Chambers of Commerce and Industry-certified occupational



exams annually: two thirds of this number are specially trained in administrative functions. There are currently around 350 recognized occupations for which the federal government has issued training directives. The German model allows staff with the required vocational knowledge to be recruited on an equal footing with their universityeducated counterparts. Employing experienced personnel with vocational qualifications - as opposed to those from the higher education system (as is the case in most nearshore countries) also helps reduce wage costs. Moreover, attrition rates are also drastically reduced.

#### **Competitive Labor Costs**

Another decisive argument in favor of Germany as a premium location for business services has been the significant closing of the labor cost gap between Germany and its eastern European neighbors.

In fact, Germany has gained the labor-cost edge in recent years, recording the lowest labor cost growth rate within the EU of just 1.8 percent.

Since 2000, wages have risen in most European countries - at a rate significantly above that of the EU-27 average increase of 3.3 percent. Some countries, particularly those in central and eastern Europe, have recorded up to double digit percent labor cost increases as high as 20 percent. Labor turnover rates in Germany are significantly lower than in near or offshore locations (between five and ten percent in Germany). A general statutory minimum wage does not exist within the business services industry in Germany. Special collective agreements negotiated and signed with trade unions help reduce labor costs by up to 40 percent.

#### Internationality

Around 7.1 million foreign nationals live in Germany (equivalent to almost nine percent of the total population). Fifteen percent of Germany's two million university students are from overseas. Germany is above the EU average in terms of languages spoken (both in number and quality): over 70 percent of German adults are able to speak at least one foreign language; and more than 30 percent are able to speak two or more foreign languages. Germany ranks above the EU average and has the largest pool of non-native English speakers.

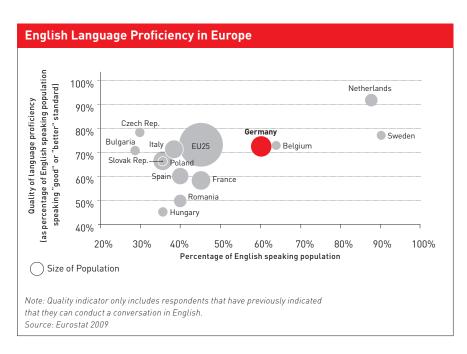
# **Dynamic Labor Market**

#### **Recruitment Services**

Recruitment services are offered free of charge by the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency FEA) which has job centers in all large towns and cities. There are several programs offering extensive public support for hiring employees - please refer to the "Incentives" section (pp. 12-13) for more information. Alternatively, private recruitment agencies can be engaged to help identify the appropriate specialist personnel. Such agencies typically charge 1.5-2 monthly gross salaries from the recruiting employer or a fee from the prospective job applicant (usually not exceeding EUR 2,000) for their services.

### **Training Support**

Germany offers a diverse pool of resources and institutes to train and educate the workforce. The majority provide training programs (that often include in-house internships) tailor-made to individual company needs



A number of educational training firms offer certified training and continuing education courses especially designed to meet industry needs. In some cases, courses and retraining programs are subsidized by the European Social Fund (ESF). In addition, retraining programs are often wholly financed by the local FEA job center if employees are recruited from the ranks of the unemployed.

## **Labor Law Regulations**

Germany's different employment models allow investors to select from a range of flexible employment solutions. Regular employment contracts are not time restricted and can be terminated by a written letter of termination. Regular employment contracts generally include a sixmonth probationary period during which the employment contract can be terminated at any time subject to a two-week notification period.

Companies are also free to offer fixed-term contracts. Such fixedterm contracts automatically expire on a specified date without written termination required. The employer then decides whether to renew the contract or otherwise. Fixed-term contracts are limited to a maximum of two years (four years during the first four years of a company's existence). A fixed-term contract may be extended up to three times provided the total duration of the contract does not exceed the maximum of two years.

General working conditions (such as weekly working hours and wage levels paid) are usually laid out according to collective agreements between unions and the respective temporary employment industry employer associations. These collective agreements provide flexible working hour models by using working hour accounts to adjust the demand of the hiring company according to working time regulations.

## Temporary Labor Sector

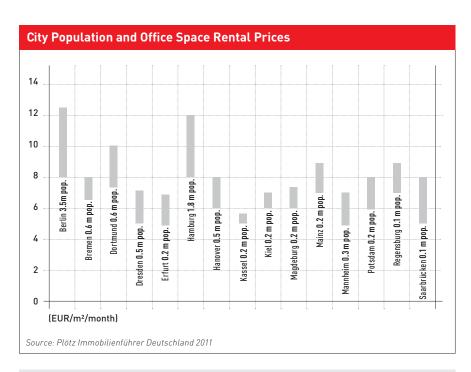
Temporary labor can easily be used to meet peak time and other demands. There has been constant growth in the German temporary labor sector since it was opened up by sweeping liberalization measures in 2004.

At present, there are more than 870,000 people employed in the temporary labor market. Moreover, Germany also boasts many temporary employment agencies that are able to provide suitable personnel at short notice. The duration and the terms of employee service termination in the hiring company are not subject to labor regulations but are set out in the service contract between the hiring company and temporary employment agency.

# World Class Infrastructure

Germany provides access to a comprehensive infrastructure that integrates the most modern telematics, IT, and telecommunications systems. Germany's high quality and redundancy of electricity supply guarantees uninterrupted energy supply for all business activities. Highly competitive real estate costs help make Europe-wide services from Germany affordable.

Thanks to an average vacancy rate of around 10 percent, investors typically find a tenant market with negotiable rents and conditions. Rental prices in German major cities for quality office space in good locations start from as little as EUR  $5/m^2$  a month. A modern and reliable public transport system allows easy access to office locations: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



# Germany – The Most Attractive Business Location in Europe

Germany remains the most important location for US companies looking to expand in Europe according to the eighth AmCham Germany Business Barometer. US investors consider Germany to have handled the global economic downturn in robust fashion, allowing the country to significantly improve its attractiveness as a place to do business. This can be attributed to changes made to the economic framework in recent years. A large majority of US companies saw renewed growth in revenues in 2010, and most have an optimistic outlook for 2011.

With state-of-the-art transportation networks by road and rail, as well as a dense network of both national and international airports, Germany provides access to markets on a truly international scale.

# Incentives for **Business Services** in Germany

Germany offers numerous incentives for all investors - regardless of whether they are from Germany or otherwise. There is a large selection of programs designed to support a wide variety of business activities at different stages of the investment process available. Support ranges from cash incentives for the reimbursement of direct investment costs to incentives for recruitment and training support. Germany's investment incentives package significantly reduces investor operations facility set-up costs. The package consists of cash incentives and loan programs offering attractive interest rates and public quarantees at the state and national level.

### **Investment Grants**

Cash incentives are provided in the form of non-repayable investment grants. The major program directing the allocation of investment grants is the Joint Task for the Promotion of Industry and Trade (GRW; Gemeinschaftsaufgabe). Money available through this program is usually distributed in the form of cash payments which are based on investment costs or assumed wage costs.

Eligible industries include most manufacturing and certain service industries. Generally speaking, investment projects receiving funds from the Joint Task program must create long-term jobs (i.e. any jobs created have to remain in the investment location for a period of at least five years on completion of the investment project). Please note that investment incentives have to be applied for before the investment actually commences.



# Supporting Human Resources Growth

Labor-related incentives play a significant role in reducing the operational costs incurred by new businesses. The range of programs offered can be classified into four main groups: programs focusing on recruitment support, training support, wage subsidies, and on-the-job training. Labor-related incentives are available throughout Germany; independent of factors such as company size, industry sector, and investment project location.

#### **Recruitment Support**

With over 800 local job centers located across Germany, the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency FEA) assists companies in finding new employees. Regardless of the qualification or experience level required, FEA job centers offer a highly competent and professional service as well as market expertise to help identify prospective employees in all sectors. Assistance provided covers everything from job vacancy advertising and pre-selection of candidates (i.e. assessment centers) to the provision of facilities for conducting job interviews. Because job centers are

state-funded institutions, all services are provided entirely free of charge. As such, initial recruiting costs incurred by the investing company are negligible.

## **Calculating Investment Grants: Payroll Option**

In the case of wage costs, the jobs created must require above average skill levels, provide significant added value or be jobs in a sector with particularly high innovation potential. Generally speaking, payroll-based grants are selected in those cases where investment costs for buildings, machinery, and equipment are relatively low but salary expenditures are comparatively high. In such instances, the calculation basis would not be the total investment costs, but rather paid salaries over a two-year period. The decision whether the payroll option can be chosen and if yes, at what incentive rate, is made at the federal state level. Those regions with the highest incentives rates offer grants of up to 30 percent of eligible expenditures for large enterprises; up to 40 percent for medium-sized enterprises; and up to 50 percent for small enterprises respectively.

## **Pre-Hiring Training**

Prospective employees often need to participate in appropriate training measures before starting at their new place of work. Such measures can be organized and administered by external specialist institutions. In general, training program costs of up to 100 percent can be subsidized. This measure is targeted at previously unemployed candidates.

#### Wage Subsidies

Employers can be granted a direct cash payment paid as a proportion of the employee's wage. Grants can account for up to 50 percent of wage costs including social security contributions.

They may be provided for a period of up to 12 months. Wage subsidies are granted when hiring from the long-term unemployed. When hiring people who are long-term unemployed, have disabilities or who are older, wage subsidies can be raised to a maximum 70 percent of wage costs paid for a period of up to eight years.

Wage subsidies are generally allocated if investors provide long-term employment contracts. Please note that wage subsidy applications should be made in advance of the contract being signed.

## On-the-Job Training

The German federal states and the European Social Fund ESF offer a variety of on-the-job training programs. Companies can be supported with subsidies covering up to 50 percent of all training costs. EU authorization is required if the amount awarded to a single company exceeds EUR 2 million.

	Recruitment	Pre-Hiring	Post-Hiring	Further Education
Incentives Programs	Recruitment Support	Pre-Hiring Training	Wage Subsidies	On-the-Job Training
Program Offerings	<ul> <li>Organization and/ or support of recruit- ment process by local job centers</li> <li>Assessment center provided by training agencies</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Organization of training courses for unemployed candidates by local job centers in close cooperation with investor</li> <li>No binding work contracts required</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Provided for employment of long-term unemployed candidates or unemployed candidates under the age of 25 or above 50</li> <li>Company has to provide a work contract with a minimum 15 hour working week</li> </ul>	■ For all employees ■ Financed by the ESF ■ EU notification required for grants exceeding EUR 2 million per company
Eligible Costs	<ul> <li>Job vacancy         advertisements,         applicant screening         and pre-selection</li> <li>Assessment center</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Trainee labor costs</li><li>Training course costs</li></ul>	<ul><li>Wage costs</li><li>Social benefits</li></ul>	■ Training courses
Available Funding Rates	■ Up to 100% of eligible costs subject to local job center budget	■ Up to 100% of eligible costs for a training period of up to three months	■ Normally up to 50% of eligible costs for up to 12 months	■ Up to 50% of eligible costs
Managing Authority	■ Local job centers	■ Local job centers	■ Local job centers	■ Appropriate federal state labor ministry

# Germany Trade & Invest Helps You

Germany Trade & Invest's teams of industry experts will assist you in setting up your operations in Germany. We support your project management activities from the earliest stages of your expansion strategy.

We provide you with all of the industry information you need – covering everything from key markets and related supply and application sectors to the R&D landscape. Foreign companies profit from our rich ex-

perience in identifying the business locations which best meet their specific investment criteria. We help turn your requirements into concrete investment site proposals; providing consulting services to ensure you make the right location decision. We coordinate site visits, meetings with potential partners, universities, and other institutes active in the industry.

Our team of consultants is at hand to provide you with the relevant background information on Germany's tax and legal system, industry regulations, and the domestic labor market. Germany Trade & Invest's experts help you create the appropriate financial package for your investment and put you in contact with suitable financial partners. Incentives specialists provide you with detailed information about available incentives, support you with the application process, and arrange contacts with local economic development corporations.

All of our investor-related services are treated with the utmost confidentiality and provided free of charge.

Strategy	Strategy Evaluation Decision & Investment		k Investment
Project Management Assistance			
Business oppor- tunity analysis and market research	Project partner identification and contact	Joint project management with regional develop- ment agency	Coordination and support of nego-tiations with local authorities
Location Consulting/Site Evaluation			
Identification of project-specific location factors	Site preselection	Site visit organization	Final site decision support
Support Services			
Identification of re- levant tax and legal issues  Project-related financing and ind tives consultance		Administrative affairs support	Accompanying incentives application and establishment formalities

# **Imprint**

#### **Publisher**

Germany Trade and Invest Gesellschaft für Außenwirtschaft und Standortmarketing mbH

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#### Layout

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#### Print

CDS Chudeck-Druck-Service, Bornheim-Sechtem

#### Support

Promoted by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and the Federal Government Commissioner for the New Federal States in accordance with a German Parliament resolution.

#### Notes

©Germany Trade & Invest, October 2011

All market data provided is based on the most current market information available at the time of publication. *Germany Trade & Invest* accepts no liability for the actuality, accuracy, or completeness of the information provided.

#### **Order Number**

16454





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the German market, and assists companies established in Germany looking to enter foreign markets.

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Promoted by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and the Federal Government Commissioner for the New Federal States in accordance with a German Parliament resolution.

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