



LAND  
BRANDENBURG

Ministerium für Arbeit, Soziales,  
Gesundheit und Familie



# The Pilot Services for Starting Your Own Business



European Union  
European Social Funds

# Preface

Every ship is guided safely into the harbour when the local pilot is on board. This also applies to our pilot services. They help you to get past the unknown, rough terrain that lies between you and your own successful business. Anybody who starts on this path is in for an adventure. Indeed, this is your entry into a new life, with new ideas and goals. All assistance which makes this path less dangerous is welcome. Our pilot services give you such assistance. We can advise you before you start up your business and during the initial phases, supporting you with competent expertise. When the course is over, you, as the founder of a new company, will be the “captain” and have to steer your ship yourself and then you will know how valuable the pilot services were.



We want successful captains. That is why Land Brandenburg has been supporting **regional pilot services** since 2001. There are also **pilot services for certain target groups** of immigrants as well as the **pilot services for colleges and universities**. This is a broad spectrum of specific offers which reach people who meet the criteria of very special founder profiles. The subsidies from us are aimed toward helping everybody who wants to start up a business to prepare him or herself as well as possible and to avoid mistakes. Approximately 4,000 people who would like to start their own business availed themselves of the advisory services of our “pilots” between 2001 and 2004. This was very successful, as the evaluation of 2005 has shown! More than two thirds of these people successfully took the leap into self-employment. The proportion of women in this group rose continually to over 42 percent. These are just two examples of this success. The evaluators found that these pilot services definitely improved the climate for starting businesses in Land Brandenburg, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and thus recommended, without any reservations, that these services and their subsidies be continued.

This is what we are doing. The subsidies have been expanded and also made more efficient. In the future, each of the colleges and universities in Land Brandenburg will have its very own pilot service. Secondly, all the pilot services will provide women with special advisory services in accordance with their needs. Finally, the elements of these subsidies will be more flexible so that the period of time now allowed for each case is varied in accordance with actual circumstances.

Thus, for example, if the ship later finds itself in distress, one of our pilots can be flown in to help it with crisis management. This is being done because the problems which young companies actually face generally do not arise until after these companies have been formed, and in many such cases this happens despite extensive preparation. Then it turns out that planning was not in accord with actual practice or that business management skills and knowledge based on experience are not sufficient to solve the problems that have arisen. In future, young companies that run into troubled seas in this way can be coached by the pilot services during the first year after they are launched. In this way we help such founders to help themselves in that we instill courage, pass on experience and lead them out of the crisis which might even be threatening their existence as entrepreneurs. I wish you much success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Ziegler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dagmar Ziegler  
Minister for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Family  
of the State of Brandenburg

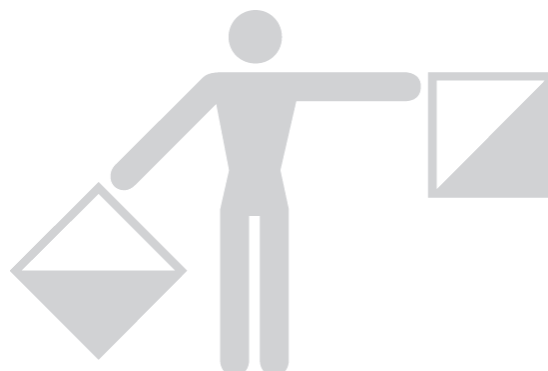
# Do you want to go into business for yourself?

The leap into self-employment must be thought through. It offers many chances, but also holds many risks. If you decide in favour of taking this step, you will find that the pilot services of Land Brandenburg's Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Family offer competent, comprehensive support. These services contain offers precisely tailored to the needs of men and women who are starting or wish to start their own company.

Before you actually start your own company, the pilot services would be glad to help you to clarify whether and how you should do this. After you have started your company, they can be your companion along the way, as you take your first steps as an entrepreneur.



During the **preparatory phase before company formation** you must ask yourself the following questions. "Am I the right type of person to be an entrepreneur?" "What are the actual chances of my business idea?" You will be expected to develop a business concept in order to persuade third parties, especially your customers, of the value of your idea and of your abilities as an entrepreneur to see it through. Part of the business concept is a financing concept with which you will have to win your bank over to your side. Not until you have convinced your bank will you also be able to avail yourself of public funds, through your bank.



In the **phase after formation** you will be confronted with other questions, such as: "How do I maintain a continual overview of my financial situation?", "How do I find and keep suitable employees?" and "How do I observe the market and when must I react?". You will have to keep developing your business concept and adapt it to changing market conditions as appropriate.

You will be able to use the pilot services during both phases. They are backed up by a network of various regional actors such as chambers of industry and commerce and will provide you with individually adapted advisory, qualification and coaching services which are supported by public funds.



# What, in particular, do the pilot services offer you?

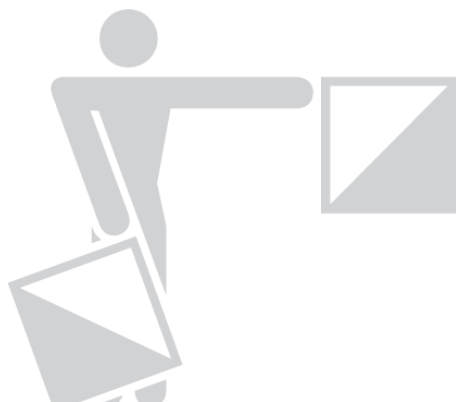
## Before your company is formed, the pilot services offer:

- Initial consultation for those interested in forming a company – independently of field of activity and occupational status,
- Participation in assessments to explore the potentials of
  - your aptitude as an entrepreneur and
  - your business idea,
- Preparation of your individual roadmap for company formation,
- Continual assistance during your preparations for company formation,
- Provision of external qualifications and advisory services with average total value of 1,600 €, and in the case of pilot services at colleges and universities with average total value of 2,600 €, and
- Consultations specifically for women.



## After company formation the pilot services offer:

- Continual assistance by the pilot services for up to half a year during the first year after company formation (initial phase) and
- Coaching by external advisors during the initial phase at a cost of up to 450 euros per company founder per day for as many as three days.





# Which conditions must you meet?

**To be admitted to support by the pilot services during the preparatory phase before company formation:**

- you must either not have gainful employment, whereby this does not mean that you must be registered with the "Agentur für Arbeit", the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" or the "Amt für Grundsicherung" (Labour Office, etc.) and your main place of residence must be in Land Brandenburg

or

- you must be subject to social insurance contributions or only be marginally employed and your main place of residence must be in Land Brandenburg

or

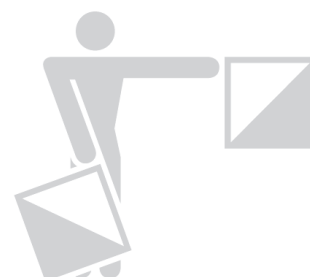
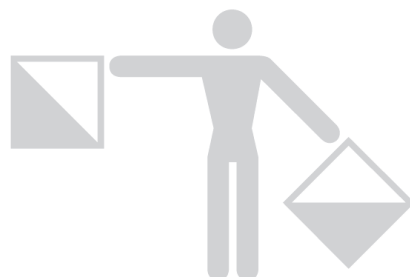
- you must be a student or research assistant at a college or university in Land Brandenburg or have completed a course of studies at a college or university in Land Brandenburg during the past three years;

and

- you must intend to start a business in Land Brandenburg,
- you must have never used the pilot services before and
- you must not be being assisted by other funds of Land Brandenburg or the federal government for the same purpose.

**You are eligible for coaching during the phase after company formation, if:**

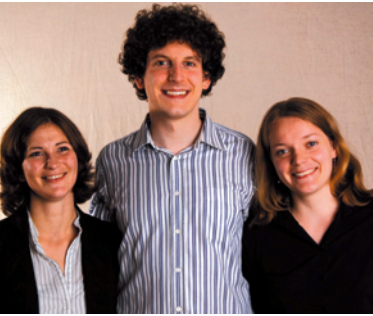
- you participated in the pilot services program during the preparatory phase before company formation,
- your company was formed at most one year ago, and
- you have not been and are not being assisted by other funds of Land Brandenburg or the federal government for the same purpose.



# Real Cases

**Katrin Lüth**  
**Björn Neuhaus**  
**Katharina Abels**

- **evalux – Evaluation. Research. Consulting.**  
**www.evalux.net**



From a lecture hall of the Viadrina European University directly into one's own office. The three social and cultural scientists Katharina Abels, Katrin Lüth and Björn Neuhaus have been offering scientific services since February 2006. "We offer colleges and universities as

well as schools for general education, institutions of further education and even companies an independent evaluation of their course and seminar offerings," explains Katrin Lüth, who, by the way, in contrast to the other team members, has already earned her master's degree.

This team of social and cultural scientists developed their idea in the context of a student initiative. "Then we noticed that there is a need in the area of education for development of quality standards and evaluations. For this reason, our idea was to offer evaluation, research and consulting both in the area of education as well as, for example, to institutions that implement European programs and projects."

The three seized the opportunity and took a seminar at their university in order to write their joint business plan with the assistance of an entrepreneur and consultant for starting up businesses. Of course, they also used the offer of the pilot services in Frankfurt (Oder). "Each of us enrolled at an assessment centre. The financial assistance made available to us for external consultants was also very helpful. In this way we were able, for example, to get answers to all our questions about our partnership agreement from a tax consultant and an attorney." However, even though they were well prepared and had some initial orders, the three entrepreneurs still had to hold their breath for a long time until their agency was finally known in all of Germany and even beyond its borders.

**Kerstin Scholze**  
**Peter Scholze**

- **"Mrs Sporty"**

Kerstin and Peter Scholze offer fitness for women in Angermünde and Schwedt. They evidently came across a gap in the market, for they cannot complain that they have no customers. "At first I was not sure of whether I was suitable for self-employment. After all, I had always been an employee but then I was out of work. In such a situation one does not know whether one will be able to take the leap into self-employment," acknowledged Kerstin Scholze. Her husband, who loves sports and is already self-employed as a consultant, looked around for an especially well proven business idea which would also be combined with intensive schooling and support and found franchising. After visiting the German Franchisers Association and researching their idea in the internet, they selected the franchising system "Mrs. Sporty", a fitness and nutrition concept for women that is implemented by franchisees in various "Mrs. Sporty Sports Studios".

To prepare herself for self-employment, Kerstin Scholze not only took advantage of the special training offered by the franchisor, but also turned to the pilot services in Frankfurt (Oder). "At the assessment centre I noticed that the other company founders and I had pretty much the same problems. For a long time I had felt I would not be able to combine family and business. There, both the coach and other participants gave me much courage." Now she laughs about the fears she once had. A great plus point for her is that everything has gone so well that she now has women employees who stand behind her and make it possible for her to spend more time looking after her 11 year old daughter.



# A Real Case

**Aleksandr Babenko, violin**

**Olga Babenko, violin**

**Mikhail Ganevskiy, cello**

**Sviatoslav Zhuk, double bass**

**Mikhail Zhukov, drums**

- **Arpeggiato, a chamber music ensemble**

Music lovers of Potsdam already know the Arpeggiato chamber music ensemble. These five professional musicians from Russia and Ukraine have already made numerous successful appearances. As their artistic director, Alexander Babenko, explains, “Some of the members of our group met three years ago in the Jewish immigration centre in Peitz. We were able to realize our idea of founding an ensemble with the help of PAGA, the Potsdam Work Association for Basic Welfare for Persons Looking for Work. They, together with the Association for Labour Market Integration and Support of Professionals, offered the first artists project in all of Germany for recipients of German welfare (ALG II). It was through this artists project that we received the opportunity to make music without having to take jobs unrelated to our profession.”

Their professional entry into the music business came in the fall of 2006. Entry was not easy, for the competition in the music business is great. They were assisted in their preparations by the pilots services in Potsdam. Here, for example, the ensemble received some helpful tips on how to establish themselves as a group of performers. “The important thing for us to recognize was that we would have to develop a characteristic that sets us apart from other chamber music ensembles. For this reason, we developed self-contained programs of related pieces, such as, for example, ‘A Christmas Dream’ or ‘Journey to Italy’.” We have gotten started. Our next objective is to extend Arpeggiato’s following to well beyond the Potsdam city line.



# Pilot services for students, research assistants and graduates of Brandenburg colleges and universities.

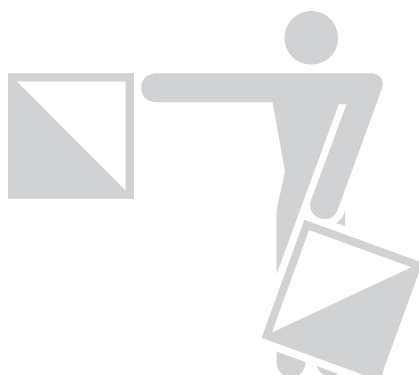
Land Brandenburg has nine colleges and Universities as well as numerous additional research facilities. These constitute a great potential for well educated people with personalities suitable for starting a business and innovative business ideas. Formations of companies by college and university graduates and other academic persons are an essential component for growth and employment in Land Brandenburg. The inclination of college and university graduates to form their own businesses is much greater than that of the general populace, and many of these start-ups are more successful than those of other groups.

It is important to encourage a positive attitude of students to self-employment as early as possible so as to motivate graduates to take up an independent occupation. While colleges and universities give students the technical prerequisites for starting a business, the basic decision also depends to a great extent on general conditions which motivate these graduates accordingly. For this reason, the pilot services for students, research assistants and graduates at the colleges and universities in Land Brandenburg should clear up any misunderstandings on their part about both actual and subjectively perceived hurdles in the process of starting a business and offer intensive, individual support to those who might be interested in going into business for themselves. The members of the target group of potential founders of new businesses who are in the academic world receive greater support and more generous terms than do the people in the other groups. This applies particularly to the duration of support and the extent of subsidized external services. Greater effects in respect to company growth, employment and development of innovative products and technologies can be expected from new start-ups which originate at scientific facilities.



The pilot services can arrange for qualifying and advisory services that are tailored to the founder's special project and founder personality for an average volume of 2,600 € per founder. External providers of services are available for this purpose. The pilot services can support these students, research assistants and graduates for an average of nine months during the preparatory phase before company formation. After company formation these founders can each receive individual coaching.

From the point of view of the economy, company formations in the area of scientific technology are of great importance. These include spin-offs from developments at colleges, universities and special research facilities. It is for this reason that in future the pilot services at these academic institutions will also have the essential task of tracking down and analysing business ideas for innovative, knowledge intensive and/or technology oriented company start-ups.





**Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus**

Contact Partner: Mr. Hiersigk  
Lehrgebäude 10, Raum 330  
Erich-Weinert-Str. 1  
03046 Cottbus  
Tel. 03 55-69 35 35  
Fax 03 55-69 20 88  
E-mail: [lotsendienst@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:lotsendienst@tu-cottbus.de)  
Mo. – Fr. 9.00 to 15.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: UNITEC Gesellschaft für Innovationsförderung und Technologietransfer an der BTU Cottbus

**Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)**

Contact Partner: Mr. Meyer-Haake  
Auditorium maximum, Raum K 18  
Logenstr. 2  
15230 Frankfurt (Oder)  
Tel. 03 35-55 34 59 02  
Fax 03 35-55 34 59 03  
E-mail: [kowa-lotse@uni-ffo.de](mailto:kowa-lotse@uni-ffo.de)  
Mo. – Fr. 9.00 bis 16.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Verein zur Förderung der Kooperation von Wissenschaft u. Arbeitswelt e. V.

**Universität Potsdam****Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen Potsdam**

Contact Partner: Mr. Knuth  
Universität Potsdam  
Haus 5, Raum 4.05.212  
Am Park Babelsberg 1  
14482 Potsdam  
Tel. 03 31-977 45 53  
Fax 03 31-977 44 81  
E-mail: [lotsendienst@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:lotsendienst@uni-potsdam.de)  
Mo. – Fr. 10.00 to 15.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Brandenburgisches Institut für Existenzgründung und Mittelstandsförderung (BIEM) e. V.

**Fachhochschule Potsdam**

Contact Partner: Ms. Richter  
Haus 4, R. 2.28, Pappelallee 8–9  
14469 Potsdam  
Tel. 03 31-580 10 64  
Fax 03 31-580 24 69  
E-mail: [gruendungsservice@fh-potsdam.de](mailto:gruendungsservice@fh-potsdam.de)  
Mo. – Fr. 10.00 to 14.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Brandenburgisches Institut für Existenzgründung und Mittelstandsförderung (BIEM) e. V.

**Fachhochschule Lausitz**

Contact Partner: Ms. Krautz  
Technologietransferstelle der FH Lausitz  
Gebäude 2, Raum 213  
Großenhainer Str. 57  
01968 Senftenberg  
Tel. 0 35 73-85 220  
Fax 0 35 73-85 229  
E-mail: [lautt@fh-lausitz.de](mailto:lautt@fh-lausitz.de)  
Mo., We., Th. 9.00 to 16.00 hours, Tu. 9.00 to 18.00 hours  
Fr. 9.00 to 14.00 hours

Institution: UNITEC GmbH Gesellschaft für Innovationsförderung und Technologietransfer an der BTU Cottbus

**Fachhochschule Eberswalde**

Contact Partner: Ms. Richter  
Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 28  
16225 Eberswalde  
Tel. 0 33 34-65 474  
Fax 0 33 34-65 38 54 74  
E-mail: [gruenderhaus@fh-eberswalde.de](mailto:gruenderhaus@fh-eberswalde.de)  
Consultation hours by previous appointment by telephone

Institution: Brandenburgisches Institut für Existenzgründung und Mittelstandsförderung (BIEM) e. V.

**Fachhochschule Brandenburg an der Havel**

Contact Partner: Mr. Rau  
Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Zentrum  
Magdeburger Str. 50  
14770 Brandenburg a. d. H.  
Tel. 0 33 81-35 52 28  
Fax 0 33 81-35 55 07  
E-mail: [gruendung@fh-brandenburg.de](mailto:gruendung@fh-brandenburg.de)  
Mo. – Fr. 10.00 to 15.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Brandenburgisches Institut für Existenzgründung und Mittelstandsförderung (BIEM) e. V.

**Technische Fachhochschule Wildau**

Contact Partners: Prof. Dr. Dieterle, Ms. Grothe  
Bahnhofstr. 1  
15745 Wildau  
Tel. 0 33 75-50 82 94  
Fax 0 33 75-50 87 07  
E-mail: [info@city-of-talents.de](mailto:info@city-of-talents.de)  
Mo. – We., Fr. 10.00 to 15.00 hours and by appointment  
Th. 14.00 to 17.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: City of Talents e. V. c/o TFH Wildau

# Pilot services for immigrants

Immigrants and others with an immigration background are likewise interested in going into business for themselves and thus in creating jobs for themselves and others too. The proportion of immigrants who clearly wish to become self-employed is above average. For many of these persons, becoming occupationally independent is the only realistic way to earn a reasonable income, there being hardly any alternatives. Also, many of these immigrants come from countries in which a "culture of occupational independence" prevails. On the other hand, the needs of immigrants acting as consumers are a source of special demand potentials and market niches that are best met by people of the same place of origin.



In addition to the problems which are faced by all persons who want to go into business for themselves, immigrants are faced with special problems related to language skills, collision of differing cultures and various misconceptions about business and economic life.

The pilot services for immigrants have the tasks of advising persons with a background of immigration on how to become self-employed and of accompany them in this endeavour. These pilot services can focus on and address the special circumstances of the various groups of immigrants. An essential feature of this work is building trust, if only in order to overcome the language barrier. For these reasons, many consultations are conducted in the native tongue of the immigrant at hand. Besides imparting general knowledge about self-employment, these pilot services also provide special assistance in the Russian, Vietnamese, French and English languages. They have intercultural competencies and a corresponding network of companions for self-employment.

**For special pilot services for immigrants, please turn to:**

**Berlin-Brandenburgische  
Auslandsgesellschaft e.V.**

Contact Partner: Ms. Lexow-Kapp

Schulstr. 8b

14482 Potsdam

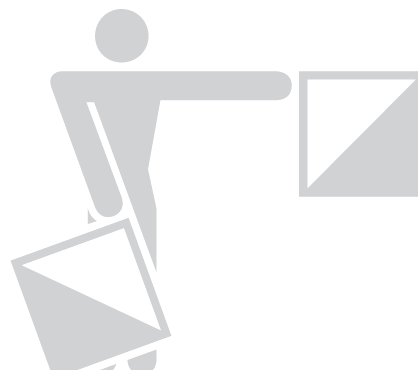
Tel. 03 31-74 00 09 75

Fax 03 31-27 08 69 0

E-mail: [lexow@bbag-ev.de](mailto:lexow@bbag-ev.de)

Region: Land Brandenburg

Tu., We. and Th. 9.00 to 16.00 hours



# Addresses of the pilot services of the counties and independent cities of Land Brandenburg

## **Barnim**

Contact Partner: Ms. Delph  
Heegermühler Str. 64  
16225 Eberswalde  
Tel. 0 33 34-25 37 26  
Fax 0 33 34-25 37 44  
E-mail: delph@ihk-projekt.de  
Mo. – Fr. 8.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Frankfurt (Oder)

## **Dahme-Spreewald**

Contact Partner: Ms. Fender  
Freiheitsstr. 120  
15745 Wildau  
Tel. 0 33 75-52 38 30  
Fax 0 33 75-52 38 44  
E-mail: fender@wfg-lds.de  
Mo. – Fr. 8.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment  
We. 9.00 to 16.00 hours,  
Lübben office, Kreisverwaltung,  
Reutergasse 12, 15907 Lübben

Institution: Regionale Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft  
Dahme-Spreewald mbH

## **Elbe-Elster**

Contact Partner: Ms. Veik  
Torgauer Str. 68–70  
04916 Herzberg  
Tel. 0 35 35-24 80 548 or 0 35 35-2 14 31  
Fax 0 35 35-2 14 32  
E-mail: wifoe@region-elbe-elster.de  
Mo. – Fr. 7.30 to 16.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Regionale Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft  
Elbe-Elster mbH

## **Havelland**

Contact Partner: Ms. Kämmerling  
Kaiserbahnhof Rathenow  
Dunckerplatz 21a  
14712 Rathenow  
Tel. 0 33 85-49 50 50  
Fax 0 33 85-49 81 84  
E-mail: bkaemmerling@standort-premnitz.de  
Mo., We., Th., Fr. 8.30 to 12.00 hours in Rathenow  
(by appointment only)  
Tu. 8.30 to 12.00 hours in Nauen (by appointment only)

Institution: Arbeitsförderungsgesellschaft Premnitz mbH

## **Märkisch-Oderland**

Contact Partner: Mr. Henning  
Garzauer Chaussee  
15344 Strausberg  
Tel. 0 33 41-33 52 27  
Fax 0 33 41-33 52 16  
E-mail: lotse@stic-wfgmol.de  
Mo. – Th. 10.00 to 17.00 hours and by appointment  
Fr. 10.00 to 13.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: STIC Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft  
Märkisch-Oderland mbH

## **Oberhavel**

Contact Partner: Ms. Krienke  
Neuendorfstr. 18a  
16761 Hennigsdorf  
Tel. 03302-55 92 01  
Fax 03302-55 92 20  
E-mail: winto@winto-gmbh.de  
Mo. – Fr. 9.00 to 16.00 hours  
by previous appointment

Institution: WInTO Wirtschafts-, Innovations- und Tourismusförderung  
Oberhavel GmbH

## **Oberspreewald-Lausitz**

Contact Partner: Ms. Michaelis  
Am Werk 8  
01979 Lauchhammer  
Tel. 0 35 74-89 22 43  
Fax 0 35 74-89 22 44  
E-mail: michaelis@wequa.de  
Mo. – Th. 8.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment  
Fr. 8.00 to 13.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: WEQUA mbH Lauchhammer

## **Oder-Spree**

Contact Partner: Ms. Lehmann  
Reinheimer Str. 18b  
15517 Fürstenwalde  
Tel. 0 33 61-71 11 42  
Fax 0 33 61-71 11 50  
E-mail: ines-lehmann@ihk-projekt.de  
Mo. – Fr. 8.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Frankfurt (Oder)

## **Ostprignitz-Ruppin**

Contact Partner: Ms. Rudolph  
Alt Ruppiner Allee 40  
16816 Neuruppin  
Tel. 0 33 91-44 64 46  
Fax 0 33 91-44 64 49  
E-mail: monika.rudolph@tgz-neuruppin.de  
Mo. – Th. 8.30 to 16.00 hours and by appointment  
Fr. 8.30 to 14.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Technologie- und Gründerzentrum OPR GmbH

## **Potsdam-Mittelmark**

Contact Partners: Mr. Wessels, Dr. Zweynert,  
Brücker Landstr. 22b  
14806 Belzig  
Tel. 03 38 41-6 51 52 or 033 841-6 54 00  
Fax 03 38 41-6 54 03  
E-mail: gruenderlotse@tgz-belzig.de  
Mo. – Fr. 9.00 to 15.00 hours and by appointment (except Th.)  
Th. morning – by appointment only – in der IHK Potsdam,  
Breite Str. 2a–c, 14467 Potsdam  
Th. afternoon – by appointment only – im Technologiezentrum Teltow,  
Potsdamer Str. 18a, 14513 Teltow

Institution: Technologie- und Gründerzentrum 'Fläming' GmbH

## **Prignitz**

Contact Partner: Ms. Balkow  
Perleberger Str. 165  
19322 Wittenberge  
Tel. 0 38 77-56 18 28 oder 0 38 77-49 92 04  
Fax 0 38 77-56 18 18  
E-mail: balkow@bbzev.de  
Mo. – Fr. 7.30 to 17.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Berufliches Bildungszentrum der Prignitzer Wirtschaft e. V.

## **Spree-Neiße**

Contact Partner: Mr. Kruczek  
Cottbuser Str. 1  
03172 Guben  
Tel. 0 35 61-62 04-21  
Fax 0 35 61-62 04-11  
E-mail: info@cit-guben.de  
Mo. – Th. 8.00 to 16.30 hours and by appointment  
Fr. 8.00 to 14.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Centrum für Innovation und Technologie GmbH

## **Teltow-Fläming**

Contact Partners: Mr. Vogler, Ms. Weit  
Markt 15/16  
14913 Jüterbog  
Tel. 0 33 72-4 40 32 11 or 0151-12 52 25 45  
Fax 0 33 72-4 40 31 21  
E-mail: s.weit@swfg.de  
Mo. and We. 7.30 – 17.00 hours LotsenStation Jüterbog  
Tu. 7.30 to 17.00 hours LotsenStation Zossen,  
Kirchstr. 1, 15806 Zossen  
Th. 7.30 to 17.00 hours LotsenStation Luckenwalde,  
Zinnaer Str. 34, 14943 Luckenwalde  
Fr. 7.30 to 12.45 hours LotsenStation Luckenwalde

Institution: Struktur- und Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft des  
Landkreises Teltow-Fläming mbH

## **Uckermark**

Contact Partner: Ms. Schröder  
Grabowstr. 18 (Haus der Wirtschaft)  
17291 Prenzlau  
Tel. 0 39 84-70 16 81  
Fax 0 33 34-25 37 44  
E-mail: schroeder@ihk-projekt.de  
Mo. – Fr. 8.30 to 16.30 hours

Institution: IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Frankfurt (Oder)

### Brandenburg an der Havel

Contact Partner: Ms. Kretschmer  
Friedrich-Franz-Str. 19  
14770 Brandenburg/H.  
Tel. 0 33 81-38 16 30  
Fax 0 33 81-38 16 31  
E-mail: info@gruenderlotse.org  
Mo. – Fr. 8.00 to 12.00 hours

Institution: Institut für angewandte mittelstandsorientierte  
Betriebswirtschaftslehre Brandenburg e. V.

### Cottbus

Contact Partners: Ms. Behrends, Mr. Fabiunke  
Goethestr. 1a  
03046 Cottbus  
Tel. 03 55-36 54 23 or 03 55-36 54 10  
Fax 03 35-36 54 94 23 or 03 55-36 54 94 10  
E-mail: behrends@cottbus.ihk.de, fabiunke@cottbus.ihk.de  
Mo. – Th. 9.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment  
Fr. 9.00 to 14.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: IHK-Bildungszentrum Cottbus GmbH

### Frankfurt (Oder)

Contact Partner: Mr. Jarantowski  
Puschkinstr. 12b  
15236 Frankfurt (Oder)  
Tel. 03 35-56 21-304  
Fax 03 35-56 21 206  
E-mail: jarantowski@ihk-projekt.de  
Mo. – Fr. 8.00 to 17.00 hours, by previous appointment

Institution: IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Frankfurt (Oder)

### Potsdam

Contact Partner: Mr. Krüger  
Dennis-Gabor-Str. 2  
14469 Potsdam  
Tel. 03 31-62 00 209  
Fax 03 31-62 00 202  
E-mail: lotsendienst@pct-potsdam.de  
Mo. – Fr. 10.00 to 16.00 hours and by appointment

Institution: Technologie- und Gewerbezentren Potsdam GmbH

### Internet Service Addresses for further Information:

- [www.agil-brandenburg.de](http://www.agil-brandenburg.de)
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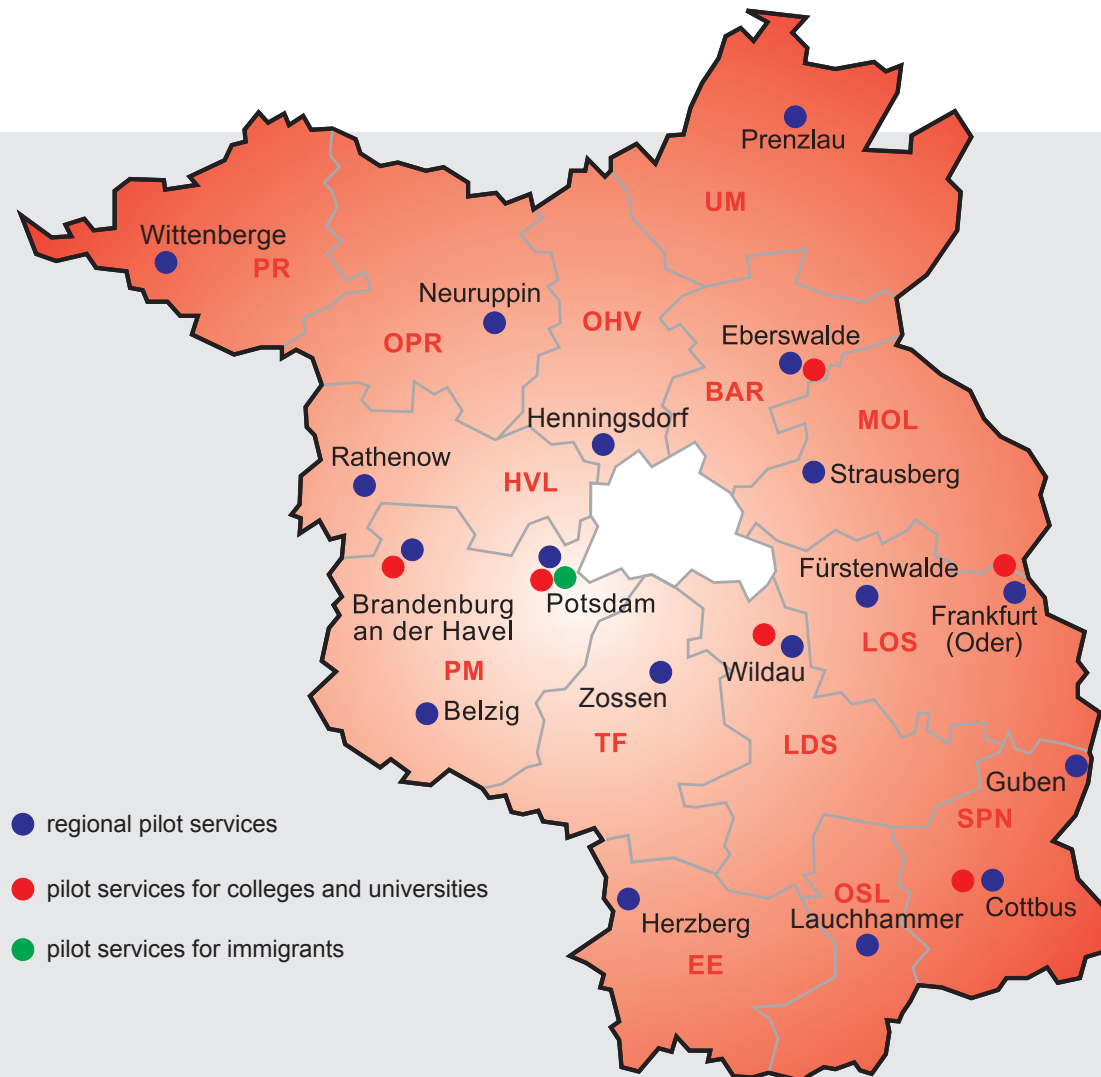
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# Seat of the pilot services of the counties and independent cities of Land Brandenburg



Addresses and Contact Partners

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### Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Family of the State of Brandenburg

Public Relations  
Heinrich-Mann-Allee 103  
14473 Potsdam  
[www.masgf.brandenburg.de](http://www.masgf.brandenburg.de)

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