

Partnership for a competitive region: ministers, mayors, businesses, leaders of the international community and the Prime Minister of Serbia at the first BFC SEE congress, Belgrade 2012



International support: GIZ Open Regional Fund financed by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland announces further cooperation with the BFC SEE network, Neum 2015



The best in Europe: the Financial Times included Skopje and 8 other certified cities the region, in its fDi list of top investment destinations, Cannes 2016



Business-friendly municipalities: BFC SEE certificate award ceremony to the best local governments in South East Europe, Zagreb 2013



Expansion of BFC SEE network: Montenegro, led by its Ministry of Finance, joined Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia, Podgorica 2016



Regional cooperation: Business friendly environment in South East Europe

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The Association of the Units of the Local Self Government - ZELS 5 Kopenhagenska Street, P.O. Box 32 1000 Skopje, Macedonia Phone: +389 2 30 99 033 Fax: +389 2 30 61 994 E-mail: contact@zels.org.mk

National partner in Montenegro

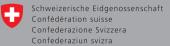
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BFC SEE STANDARD

Business Friendly Municipalities in South East Europe

www.bfc-see.org





































BUSINESS FRIENDLY CERTIFICATION

is a unique program for improving the quality of services and

Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) – the Open Regional Fund for Modernizainformation that municipalities in the SEE region offer to tion of Municipal Services, the BFC SEE Program was launched by companies, BEC SEE provides municipalities with a clear roadmap a network of partner institutions from the region with the goal of for creating a favorable business environment and introducing establishing common standards and a seal of quality for the busiinternationally recognized standards of efficient and transparent ness environment in municipalities and cities of South East Europe. local administration.

For investors looking to move or expand their operations in • Federal Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts South East Europe, BFC SEE serves as a standardized tool for (BiH) assessing the local conditions for doing business, indicating which • Ministry of Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation of municipalities in the region provide the best investment climate.

CERTIFIED MUNICIPALITIES

Since 2012, more than 60 municipalities of the region have joined the BFC SEE Program - 26 of them being certified as business-friendly: Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Bosanska Krupa, Goražde, Mrkonjić Grad, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Tešanj, Teslić and Žepče from Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bjelovar, Crikvenica, Ivanec and Jastrebarsko from Croatia; Bogdanci, Gazi Baba, Skopje, Štip, Strumica and Veles from Macedonia; Leskovac, Pančevo, Pirot, Ruma, Šabac and Stara Pazova from Serbia.

PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

Business Friendly Certification South East Europe (BFC SEE) With the support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Members of the Regional network are:

- Republika Srpska (BiH)
- Ministry of Finance Sector for Financial System and Improvement of Business Environment (Montenegro)
- Faculty of Economics in Rijeka / Center for Local Economic Development - CLER (Croatia)
- Association of Local Self-Governments ZELS (Macedonia)
- Macedonian Chambers of Commerce MCC (Macedonia)
- National Alliance for Local Economic Development NALED (Serbia)

BFC SEE has been implemented since 2012 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and since 2016 in Montenegro. New countries and partners are welcome to join the BFC SEE platform, contributing to new investment, job creation, prosperity and growth in local communities.

BUSINESS FRIENDLY CRITERIA

More than 80 certification criteria are used to evaluate the quality
The ultimate goal of the BFC SEE Program is to improve and of the local business environment in the following 12 categories:

- 1. Strategic approach to local economic development
- 2. Administrative capacity to support businesses (LED Office)
- 3. Partner relationships with the private sector (Business Council) The BFC SEE seal of quality is an internationally recognized indi-
- 4. Efficient system for issuing construction permits
- 5. Database management of business related information
- 6. Proactive approach in investment promotion and marketing
- 7. Credit worthiness and financial stability 8. Promotion of job creation and human resources development to companies.
- 9. Promotion of public-private partnerships
- 10. Suitable infrastructure and reliable utility services
- 11. Transparent and stimulating taxes and incentives policies
- 12. Use of information technologies (e-government)

Municipalities need to meet at least 75% of the criteria in order to be certified as business friendly according to the BFC SEE regional standard. The certificate is valid for two years.

BENEFITS OF BFC SEE

harmonize business conditions in the region, strengthen the image of SEE as an investment destination, encourage economic cooperation and attract new investment.

cator of efficient local administration and a favorable investment climate in South East Europe. Ensuring a stable and predictable business environment, it guarantees investors that all certified municipalities in the region provide a premium level of services

tioning themselves against the most progressive ones in SEE, securing stronger support from national and international institutions and donors. BFC SEE has been acknowledged by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and included in the SEE 2020 Strategy as a priority measure.



Municipalities entering the program set benchmarks, posi-



BFC SEE KEY RESULTS

More than 60 municipalities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 90% of certified municipalities in the region find it useful or very business environment by up to **70%** through BFC SEE certification. of quality

26 certified municipalities in the SEE region cover a total of The BFC SEE Network developed regional structures and built the 15.440 km2 of territory, providing a high quality service and business-friendly environment to approximately **2 million** people and 105.000 businesses

The conditions for doing business in BFC SEE municipalities
The BFC SEE network has sparked new regional initiatives independent mystery shopper.

Certified municipalities realized €1 billion foreign direct investments in three years (2012-2015) attracting on average three times* more investment than their non-certified peers.

Up to **20 institutions** and organizations from **5 countries** participate in the BFC SEE network contributing to enhanced regional cooperation and exchange – ministries, chambers of commerce, an association of municipalities, development agencies, CSOs and universities.

Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are improving their useful to be certified as business friendly and have a BFC SEE seal

capacities of **250+** local government officials, consultants and evaluators from the SEE region who received training on business friendly standards and certification.

are 76% better than in non-certified ones, according to an (E-permitting) and implemented projects worth more than €2 million with the support of major international institutions such as GIZ, SDC, USAID, SIDA and World Bank.



80% of all municipalities from the region (12) listed on the Financial Times list of top investment destinations in Europe (fDi Cities of the Future) are certified as business-friendly – this number has doubled since 2012

SOURCES

Evaluation Report "Ex-Post Evaluation of Business Friendly Certification";

Authors: Snežana Mišić, Stefan Elsing; Publisher: GIZ ORF MMS, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016 Study "Capacities of Local Governments in AP Vojvodina for Local Economic Development";

Authors: NALED, Ipsos Strategic Marketing; Publisher: Provincial Secretariat for Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government, Serbia, 2016

Local government databases and available statistical information, for more info please visit www.bfc-see.org

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT is not driven by the state alone - local governments need to recognize efficient service to investors.



BY PARTICIPATING in the Business Friendly Certification program, municipalities in SEE have the opportunity to of their peers in the region, and to improve their conditions for doing business in line with the needs of investors.

ONE SUCCESSFUL INVESTMENT usually leads to another as it sends a positive message on local conditions for

INCREASED BUSINESS activity at the local level brings new jobs prosperity in the local community.

If you are interested in applying for the BFC SEE program, please visit www.bfc-see.org