

Building a strong and sustainable Business Angels Network in Kosovo

The successful collaboration with Kosovo Ministry of Economy and Prishtina REA



This success case highlights collaboration between the Ministry of Economy in Kosovo, Prishtina REA, and EBN to address a critical access-to-finance gap within Kosovo's innovation ecosystem.

This is the story of how EBN facilitated capacity-building to empower innovation and economic growth in Kosovo and foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Europe's leading innovation partner network, fast-tracking your connectivity and certifying your value

We connect exemplary entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem builders to drive greater innovation capacity in European regions – and beyond.

Tapping into our members' best possible actions to create vibrant, thriving startups and SMEs gives us a line-of-sight to identify the main pain points affecting regional innovation capacity. We then focus on unlocking the most efficient path to ensure that innovation ecosystem services are advantageous to local innovation stakeholders and their regions.

We believe that in a world face our global challenges, innovative entrepreneurs are the force for sustainable economic development and greater well-being in our local regions. By strengthening regional innovation ecosystems, governments can boost job creation, enhance regional attractiveness, and foster economic resilience.

- ◆ **180+ members** spanning **37+ countries**, representing leading innovation ecosystem organisations.
- ◆ Over **29,000 startups and SMEs supported yearly**, from ideation to scaling.
- ◆ **9,000+ high-skilled jobs created every year** across the EU|BIC community-supported startups.
- ◆ **€880 million in capital funding raised**, with 60% from private sources and 40% from public sources.
- ◆ EU|BIC-supported companies achieve an **85% three-year survival rate**, significantly higher than the EU average of 58%.

Our Clients and Partners





The project

Partners of EBN in this project

Prishtina REA

A dynamic entrepreneurship support organisation fostering startups and SMEs in Kosovo, Prishtina REA bridges gaps between entrepreneurs, investors, and other ecosystem players.



Enterprise Europe Network Kosovo

The local branch of Europe's largest support network for SMEs, Enterprise Europe Network Kosovo connects businesses with international markets, offering advisory services and access to funding opportunities.



Ministry of Economy Kosovo

The Ministry of Economy leads the national innovation agenda and provides the regulatory and strategic framework to empower entrepreneurial and innovative initiatives.



The timeline

- 2022:** Exploratory sessions between Prishtina REA and EBN to outline the project's scope.
- 2023:** Development of the strategic planning and stakeholder engagement.
- 2024:** Delivery of capacity-building workshop in Prishtina, attended by key ecosystem actors.
- Post-Workshop:** Follow-up activities to finalise the BAN framework and support implementation.

The background

Kosovo's entrepreneurial ecosystem has witnessed promising growth in recent years, yet barriers to accessing early-stage capital persist. Many startups in Kosovo struggle to secure funding and mentorship, which limits their potential for innovation and growth. Recognising this challenge, Prishtina REA, supported by the Ministry of Economy, partnered with EBN to establish a strong and sustainable Business Angels Network (BAN).

The challenge

Kosovo lacked a structured framework for angel investing. The absence of a dedicated network to connect startups with high-net-worth investors hindered the flow of capital and mentorship needed for early-stage ventures. Additionally, the entrepreneurial ecosystem was fragmented, with limited collaboration between stakeholders.

The approach

The solution was designed to deliver tangible outcomes, including:

- Establishing a shared vision and strategic framework for Kosovo's BAN.
- Creating mechanisms to connect startups with angel investors for capital and mentorship.
- Building a pipeline of investment-ready ventures while enhancing investor confidence through robust governance and operational structures.

The solution

Leveraging its EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework, EBN delivered a comprehensive capacity-building programme to address the key challenges in establishing Kosovo's Business Angels Network (BAN). The programme incorporated EBN's core mission of Access to Finance and aimed to empower key ecosystem stakeholders, including government representatives, entrepreneurs, potential investors, and support organisations. The sessions introduced global best practices and EU|BIC methodologies for developing sustainable BANs.

Services Delivered

1

Ecosystem mapping

Structured group exercises facilitated the identification of Kosovo's **strategic innovation sectors** and key stakeholders across government, private sector, academia, and support organisations.

Participants collaboratively assessed the **maturity and sustainability** of these sectors, aligning them with EU priorities such as digital transformation and green innovation.

2

Governance and operational strategies

Detailed discussions on BAN governance frameworks, including decision-making processes, membership criteria, and operational structures.

Exploration of various legal and organisational models, including member-managed and manager-managed BANs, tailored to Kosovo's regulatory environment.

3

Raising private investment

Practical sessions on attracting high-net-worth individuals to join the BAN. Strategies included showcasing successful case studies, leveraging tax incentives, and building confidence in the BAN's value proposition.

Emphasis on creating a robust deal pipeline by integrating tools for **startup evaluation, investment readiness, and mentorship mechanisms** to connect investors with high-potential ventures.

4

Growing human capital

Training sessions on angel investing practices, such as deal screening, due diligence, and post-investment mentoring, to enhance the capabilities of local investors and ecosystem stakeholders.

Capacity-building initiatives to ensure local organisations, including incubators and accelerators, could independently support startups in accessing private investment.

5

EU|BIC best practices and methodologies

The workshop incorporated lessons from the **EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework**, showcasing proven models from across the EU|BIC community. Key principles such as **collaboration, transparency, and sustainability** were highlighted to ensure the replicability of the BAN framework in Kosovo.

The results

- ◆ **A clear vision and governance framework:** The initiative established a well-defined vision for Kosovo's Business Angels Network (BAN), providing a roadmap for its structure, operations, and long-term sustainability. The framework includes governance principles, membership criteria, and operational guidelines, ensuring the BAN is equipped to support entrepreneurs effectively.
- ◆ **Engaged stakeholders across key sectors:** The workshop united 15 key stakeholders representing entrepreneurs, government bodies, academia, financial institutions, and support organisations. These diverse participants contributed unique insights and expertise, fostering a multi-disciplinary approach to building the BAN.
- ◆ **Alignment with EU priorities:** The project ensured that the BAN's development aligns with EU priorities, such as digital transformation, sustainability, and fostering innovation ecosystems. This alignment reinforces Kosovo's connection to regional and global innovation agendas, opening doors to cross-border collaboration and funding opportunities.

A foundation for long-term impact

The workshop laid the groundwork for a vibrant BAN that promises to connect startups with essential financial and mentorship resources. By leveraging EBN's expertise and the **EU|BIC Innovation Ecosystem Framework**, Kosovo has taken a pivotal step toward creating a resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem. The BAN is positioned to drive innovation, job creation, and economic growth while addressing the critical gap in early-stage investment for startups.



Key takeaways

EBN's guidance and facilitation have been instrumental in shaping Kosovo's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The workshop provided us with the tools and strategies to build a strong BAN and foster sustainable innovation.

Ahmet Jetullahu-Meti, Prishtina REA

This case underscores the importance of collaboration between local stakeholders and international expertise. By combining local knowledge with EBN's proven methodologies, Kosovo is building a foundation for long-term entrepreneurial success.

We help you at every stage of your innovation ecosystem-building journey

EBN hosts a pan-European, global entrepreneurial innovation network that helps connect government partners with entrepreneurship and innovation support organisations (ESO/ISOs), such as the EU|BICs, to solve their greatest challenges. Our network serves as both a performance assessor and a capacity-building ecosystem, empowering innovation-driven transformation in regions worldwide.

By collaborating with EBN and its community of entrepreneurship support organisations (ESOs), governments can:

- ✓ **Strengthen Regional Innovation Ecosystems**
- ✓ **Unlock Access to Private and Public Finance**
- ✓ **Promote Policy Coherence and Alignment**
- ✓ **Catalyse Job Creation and Economic Growth**
- ✓ **Foster Internationalisation and Cross-Border Innovation**

We help you at every stage of your innovation journey - from ideation to impactful delivery - ensuring that every country, region and city can leverage innovation to solve its greatest challenges and achieve sustainable growth.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

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European Business and Innovation Centre Network - EBN

Avenue Roger Vandendriessche 18
1150 Brussels
Belgium

www.ebn.eu