Report

Bitkom e.V. hub conference 2016, Berlin, 22 November 2016
With the Make-IT Alliance, we want to nurture innovative young businesses in developing countries, and are looking for strong partners for this purpose. This alliance benefits all concerned, since it unites practical knowledge and experience and promotes global and regional networking.

Thomas Silberhorn
Parliamentary State Secretary for the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
In the afternoon, the Make-IT Alliance was officially founded in the presence of its partners in the BMZ lounge. Parliamentary State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn gave a few words of welcome and signed a joint declaration of intent together with the founding members.

The Make-IT Alliance is the next step following on from the announcement of BMZ’s Make-IT Initiative at the German government’s national IT summit in 2015 and its further development at CeBIT 2016 in conjunction with the German private sector. The aim is to promote technology entrepreneurship worldwide. This is happening in collaboration with international and German businesses and associations.

At the hub conference, the declaration of intent was signed by the following partners:

- Businesses: SAP Deutschland SE, Orange, Autodesk GmbH, Deutsche Post DHL Group and IBM Deutschland GmbH
- Associations: the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the German-African Business Association and the Federal Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media (Bitkom)
- Social enterprises: betterplace lab, Ashoka Deutschland GmbH and Impact Hub.

In the BMZ lounge, BMZ also held its own programme including five partner contributions throughout the day. During these ‘inspire talks’, Autodesk GmbH, DIHK, SAP Deutschland SE, IBM Deutschland GmbH and Orange each held a brief presentation outlining their commitment to promoting start-ups and technology entrepreneurship. These presentations were followed by questions from the audience.
Visitors

The hub conference attracts visitors from all over the world. This year it registered a record number of visitors with over 2,000 participants on a single day. There were always 15 to 20 visitors in the BMZ lounge during the partner presentations. Considerable interest was shown in BMZ’s work and in Make-IT. Around 65 visitors were present during the foundation of the Make-IT Alliance, with the press also in attendance.

The BMZ lounge was well frequented throughout and was appreciated by the audience of professionals. Some of the visitors, including German and European companies such as telecom businesses, directly expressed their interest in the Make-IT Alliance. Thanks to the open atmosphere in the BMZ lounge, the Make-IT partners were able to network more intensively amongst themselves and with BMZ.

Jens Spahn, Parliamentary State Secretary for the German Federal Ministry of Finance, also visited the BMZ lounge after the founding of the Make-IT Alliance. At the conference there was also contact with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, and particular interest was expressed in the publication entitled ‘Toolkit – digitisation in development cooperation and international cooperation in education, culture and media’.

Further opportunities for cooperation within the Make-IT Alliance were also discussed during a conversation between representatives from Orange and BMZ.

Public relations

Thanks to media interest in the signing, the BMZ Twitter account helped to make ‘#hub16’ the ‘#1 trending topic’.

The tweets and Facebook posts on the Make-IT Alliance were consistently positive. Bitkom e.V. and Deutsche Welle each held an interview with Parliamentary State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn after the signing of the declaration of intent.

The speech made by Parliamentary State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn was transmitted live via the hub conference website. The speech can also be accessed on Bitkom’s YouTube channel.

‘Compared with French actors, I believe German development cooperation is on the leading edge in the field of digitisation. I can see huge potential in indirect investment with local project partners.’

Ludovic Centonze,
Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility Project Director - Orange for Development
Hub conference 2016

In recent years, the hub conference has become a hotspot for visionary thinkers, global players, start-ups, hidden champions and CEOs. With participants from 50 nations, more than 400 start-ups and 130 speakers on three different stages, it is now an established event at which the IT industry can exchange news and views.