Baden-Württemberg cultivates ties throughout the world. Foreign trade, in particular, plays an outstandingly important role. The State has worked in close partnership with regions from all around the globe over many years. It is the intention of the State Government to pursue and extend its development cooperation with these partners.

Both on the European level – for instance within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region or the Four Motors – and in its partnerships beyond the borders of Europe, Baden-Württemberg is revered as a reliable partner willing to take on the challenges of globalization with new ideas.
Foreign trade as a motor for the economy

Baden-Württemberg is Germany’s number one export state. Foreign trade has been the most powerful motor for the economy of our State for many years. In Baden-Württemberg, one job in three depends upon the export market. By linking ecology with economy, our aim is to further strengthen the economic success of our State.

Companies from Baden-Württemberg are active in global markets. The larger players, notably the big car manufacturers, suppliers to the automotive industry, and mechanical engineering firms, enjoy worldwide renown. But the names of many small and medium-sized businesses are well known to industry experts the world over as synonymous with quality, reliability and the very highest technological standards. In this way, Baden-Württemberg has acquired the reputation of a partner which combines precision and quality with innovation.

Baden-Württemberg-based companies have successfully defended leading positions in terms of their innovative drive and expertise for many years, making them the partner of choice when it comes to the leading industries of the future such as renewable energies or resource-saving machines and products. Baden-Württemberg leads the international field in research and science. Maintaining and extending this lead is a key objective. Dialogue and international cooperation play a key role in ensuring the global competitive strength of our science base.

Our dual system of vocational education is regarded as exemplary the world over. The system involves both businesses and vocational colleges in the further education and training of school leavers, guaranteeing an optimum balance between theory and practice and providing a qualified up-coming workforce in commerce and industry. By introducing the Cooperative University, Baden-Württemberg has now transferred this model to the higher education sphere with great success. We intend to continue to mediate this education model as one of Baden-Württemberg’s most successful “exports” in the international arena.

The State of Baden-Württemberg operates its own foreign marketing support company entitled “Baden-Württemberg International Gesellschaft für internationale wirtschaftliche und wissenschaftliche Zusammenarbeit mbH (bw-i)”. The role of this organization is to support small and medium-sized enterprises to open up export markets and also to provide assistance to universities in promoting Baden-Württemberg as an attractive centre of learning and research.

By launching an initiative promoting the construction of hubs for industry and commerce known as “German Centres”, Baden-Württemberg has created a unique opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises in particular to gain an established footing in distant and difficult markets. German Centres currently operate in Beijing, Djakarta, Mexico City, Moscow, Shanghai, Singapore and Yokohama.

International partnerships

Baden-Württemberg cultivates close long-term partnerships with regions all over the world. Its cooperative association with the Canadian province of Ontario, for instance, celebrated its 25th anniversary at the end of 2012. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding, the State laid the
foundation stone for further intensification of its existing excellent relationship in the fields of business, the environment and science. Other partnerships exist between Baden-Württemberg and regions outside of Europe in

- China (Liaoning since 1982 and Jiangsu since 1986)
- Japan (Kanagawa since 1989)
- South Africa (KwaZulu Natal since 1996)
- The Russian Federation (Sverdlowsk Region since 1991, St. Petersburg since 1998 and Moscow since 2007)
- Burundi (since the beginning of the eighties)

Weiterführende Links

Baden-Württemberg Invest
Baden-Württemberg international
CORDIS