



The Brand4Talents project is entering an exciting new phase, moving from knowledge building and strategic preparation towards concrete local action. The foundations are now in place, and our partnership is ready to turn the common Brand4Talents approach into activities tailored to the needs of our regions. Over the past months, important building blocks have been completed. Partners have strengthened their knowledge of talent attraction, retention and place branding, explored good practices, and worked together on a common strategic approach. Our current focus is on developing the Brand4Talents strategy for multi-sectoral governance of talent factors and place branding in lagging areas. At the same time, work is increasingly moving to the local level. Partners are preparing their Brand Books and Local Action Plans, involving local stakeholders and identifying development opportunities that respond to the specific challenges and potential of their territories. This co-creation process will provide the foundation for the upcoming pilot activities. The next phase will put our ideas into practice. Pilot partners will test concrete interventions aimed at improving the conditions for attracting and retaining talent, while place branding activities will help regions strengthen and communicate their unique identity and attractiveness. The coming months will therefore be about turning strategy into action, testing ideas and learning from real implementation.

BRAND4TALENTS E-NEWSLETTER

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MEETING #2



Greifswald
14-15 July 2026



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Brand4Talents

The Brand4Talents partnership gathered for its second partner meeting in Greifswald, Germany. A major focus of the first day was Work Package 1 and the transition from strategy to local action. Partners explored how the common Brand4Talents approach will be translated into Brand Books and Local Action Plans. Pilot partners received practical guidance on how to establish their local teams, organise stakeholder sessions, select appropriate tools and methods, and document the results. The discussions and questions helped ensure a common understanding before an intensive period of local co-creation begins.

In the afternoon, the partnership travelled to Szczecin, Poland, for an inspiring study visit focusing on place branding in practice. At Szczecin City Hall, we learned about the city's major rebranding process, from the initial motivation and procurement through design and implementation to public acceptance, challenges and key success factors. A short guided tour allowed partners to see elements of the city brand in the urban environment. The visit provided a valuable real-life example for our pilot partners, who will soon be working on similar processes in their own territories.

On the second day, the partnership turned its attention to Work Package 2 and project communication, both coordinated by EMFIE. Partners presented and discussed their initial ideas for the upcoming pilot actions, creating an excellent starting point for peer cooperation. The face-to-face exchange allowed them to learn from each other's concepts, provide feedback and jointly consider how different approaches to talent attraction, retention and place branding could be tested in their regions.

The meeting concluded with another valuable study visit to Casa Familia Hotel on the island of Usedom, an inspiring example of successful talent attraction and retention. Partners gained behind-the-scenes insights into the hotel's operation, while the owner shared experiences, corporate policies and key success factors for attracting and retaining committed employees.



Greifswald
14-15 July 2026

Szczecin
14 July 2026



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14-15 JULY
GREIFSWALD

PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTRE BISTRA PTUJ (SRC BISTRA PTUJ) (SLO)

Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj (SRC Bistra Ptuj) is a public research and development organisation based in Ptuj – the oldest town in Slovenia, with a history of more than 2,000 years. While the city is known for its Roman past, medieval streets, and vibrant cultural life (including one of Europe's most famous carnivals, Kurentovanje), it is also a place that is actively looking toward the future. SRC Bistra Ptuj plays a key role in this transformation by connecting local authorities, businesses, schools, and communities, and by bringing European projects into the region



With strong experience in international cooperation, innovation, and regional development, the organisation focuses on improving quality of life and creating opportunities for people to live, work, and grow in the region. The combination of rich heritage and a strong development mindset makes Ptuj a unique place to test new ideas around talent attraction and community-driven development.

Within the Brand4Talents project, SRC Bistra Ptuj acts as the Lead Partner, coordinating the entire partnership and ensuring that activities are delivered smoothly across countries. Beyond coordination, the team is highly motivated to implement the project locally, as the region faces real challenges such as young people leaving in search of better opportunities. The project offers a chance to turn this around by making Ptuj more visible, more attractive, and more connected. Through local events, storytelling, and collaboration with citizens and stakeholders, SRC Bistra Ptuj wants to show that smaller cities can offer not only a high quality of life, but also meaningful professional and personal opportunities. The motivation is simple: to make people not only visit Ptuj, but choose to stay, return, or build their future here

PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

NETWORK FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION – HÁRFA (HUN)

Over the past months, our role in Brand4Talents has been about turning knowledge into something that cities can actually use.

As Work Package 1 leader, HÁRFA has been at the centre of developing the project's capacity-building and governance approach. We started by creating the Capacity Building Training Programme and delivering the Brand4Talents Masterclass, bringing together knowledge on place branding, talent attraction and retention, and practical tools that partners could apply to their own cities.

But the real added value came from what happened next: taking this shared knowledge and developing it further together. We coordinated the Brand4Talents Ambassador Exam, creating a community of certified ambassadors across the partnership who can now carry the project's knowledge back to their local environments. We also developed the local e-learning materials and supported partners in translating and delivering them to their own stakeholders.

Another important step was building the foundations of the Brand4Talents Governance Strategy. Through the collection of good practices from across the partnership and the subsequent Co-creation Sprint, we worked together on a common vision for talent governance, explored the talent journey from attraction to retention, and translated governance principles into practical considerations for cities. The result is the Brand4Talents Governance Strategy – a framework designed not simply to describe what good governance should look like, but to help cities move from strategy towards local action.

And this is where the next chapter begins.

HÁRFA is also working with the Municipality of Derecske, our associated strategic partner and the project's Hungarian pilot city.

Derecske will put the Brand4Talents approach into practice through a community co-working space and the revival of its student mayor tradition – two initiatives designed to strengthen local connections, create opportunities for young people and contribute to a stronger sense of belonging.

There is still plenty of work ahead. The methodology is now in place; the next challenge is to see what happens when it meets the reality of a small city. For us, that is where the real test of Brand4Talents begins: can the knowledge we have built together become something people can actually experience in their own city?

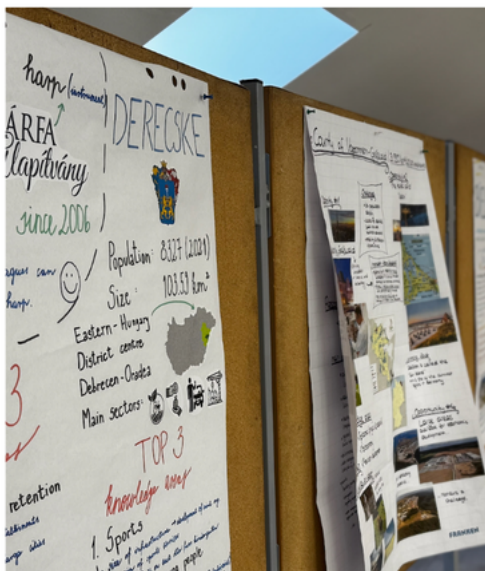


Brand4Talents Governance Strategy Paper (D1.2.3)

How Lagging Areas Can Attract and Keep Talent

Brand4Talents

Version 1
July 2024



PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY IN BIELSKO-BIAŁA - ARR SA (POL)

Over the past months, the Brand4Talents team in Bielsko-Biała has been moving the project forward locally: learning from partners, exploring good practices and preparing for the next stages of implementation. Or, to put it simply: dużo się działo*.

One of the important moments was the second Brand4Talents partner meeting in Greifswald, Germany, where partners focused on the next stage of the project and the pilot activities that will soon begin in participating regions. The meeting was an opportunity to refine ideas, compare different local perspectives and discuss how planned activities could work in practice. For us, it was also a useful moment to look at Bielsko-Biała's own direction in the wider context of the project and see how other cities and regions are approaching similar challenges.



We also reached an important milestone within our team. Anna Janczyk-Zabrocka and Agnieszka Kowajsza successfully completed the Brand4Talents Ambassador Exam and became certified Brand4Talents Ambassadors. Their submissions were recognised for their focus on authentic place branding, quality of life and community-centred development, as well as for presenting Bielsko-Biała as a place with a strong and coherent identity. The evaluation also highlighted their understanding of the strategic and governance aspects behind talent attraction and retention, strengthening the expertise we can now bring into the next stages of the project.

Another important part of our work has been exploring good practices in place branding, talent attraction, retention and local cooperation. Examples collected in the project's Excellence Directory became a valuable source of inspiration during the Co-creation Sprint, where partners contributed to the development of the B4T Governance Strategy. Together, we discussed what good talent governance could look like by 2030, mapped the talent journey from attraction to retention, and considered how common governance principles could be translated into practice in different local contexts. For Bielsko-Biała, this also meant asking some very practical questions: Which ideas could work here? Who should be involved? And how can international inspiration be translated into local action?

Alongside these international activities, we have also been working internally on local priorities, potential target groups and the organisations that could play a role in the next stages of Brand4Talents. This means looking at how different local actors – from public institutions and business to education and community organisations – can contribute to creating an environment that is attractive to people not only at the moment they discover Bielsko-Biała, but also when they decide whether to build their future here.

The next step is to bring these elements together and continue shaping an approach that is authentic, collaborative and rooted in what makes Bielsko-Biała a good place to live, work, develop and stay.

* There's been a lot going on.

PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

EMFIE (HUN)

As a knowledge provider and communication leader partner in the Brand4Talents project, EMFIE has been actively contributing to both knowledge development and project communication.

Under governance methodology development, EMFIE worked closely with the WP Leader and the whole partnership to lay the foundations for the Brand4Talents governance strategy. An important part of this work was gathering inspiring success stories and practical tools from different sectors, focusing on talent attraction and retention, place branding and multi-level governance. These contributions fed into the Excellence Directory, a visual and easy-to-use collection of good practices, with particular attention to approaches that can support lagging areas. EMFIE also took part in the online Co-creation Sprint Workshop, working together with partners to shape the Brand4Talents toolkit through innovative and creative co-working methods. While the main WP2 activities are scheduled for the next periods, preparations are already underway. During both project meetings, the partnership discussed the upcoming tasks, while EMFIE worked with the LP and WP1 Leader to align activities and deadlines across the two work packages. As part of Pilot assessment (A2.2) activities, EMFIE also developed the workshop methodology for the co-development of the pilot assessment methodology, providing a basis for the activities planned for the next period.



Face-to-face cooperation also played an important role during this period. EMFIE participated in the Kick-off Meeting in March 2026 in Derecske, Hungary, and the 2nd Partner Meeting in July 2026 in Greifswald, Germany. At both meetings, EMFIE presented the communication-related tasks of the partnership and introduced the upcoming activities under Work Package 2.

Communication activities also gained strong momentum during the period. As communication leader, EMFIE launched the project-level communication activities and supported partners in their own communication efforts. Key achievements included the development of project templates (Word and PPT), preparation of content for partners' websites, the launch and management of the project-level social media channels and webpage, and the development of the project-level communication plan. The first eNewsletter was also produced, together with a project video, helping to give Brand4Talents a strong and recognisable communication presence from the early stages of implementation.

PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

LANDKREIS VORPOMMERN-GREIFSWALD (GER)



Projectpartnermeeting in
Vorpommern-Greifswald,
13.-15. July 2026

One of the highlights of the first half of the year in the Brand4Talents project was, of course, the partner meeting in Vorpommern-Greifswald.

But wait – let's go back to the beginning.

In the spring, we traveled with the other project partners to beautiful Hungary—specifically to Debrecen—for our joint kick-off meeting. There, the team gained a deeper understanding of the project's intricacies, got to know the entire team, and picked up plenty of tools for implementing the project.

Armed with a concrete roadmap for the next two years and many wonderful impressions of the project group, we headed back home. There were many tasks awaiting us: first things first – we needed our own project manager, so we published a job posting, conducted the application process, navigated the German bureaucratic red tape, and hired a new colleague right on schedule for June 1: Marie Möller.

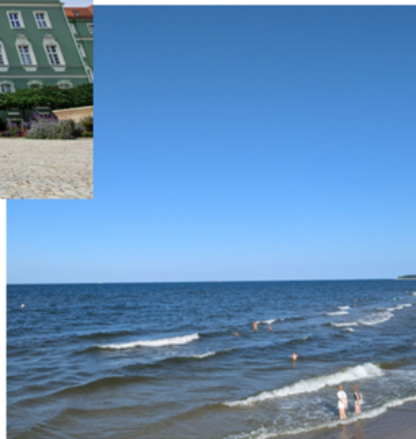
With her on board, we hit the ground running. The local training session was next and was well attended with over 30 participants. We strengthened our relationships with local institutions, and, of course, the project partner meeting in Vorpommern-Greifswald was on the agenda. There, we designed a comprehensive program for the 2.5 days.

In addition to discussing the project's content, current monitoring tasks, Work Packages 1 & 2, and upcoming public

New Projectmanager
Marie Möller and
Country Administrator
Michael Sack



The projectteam in
Szczecin



The beach of Zinnowitz, Usedom.

relations efforts, the goal was to help participants better understand the district's ambivalence and to visit a best-practice example in the field of place branding. So on July 14, the group traveled to Szczecin, where our contact person reported on the initiation and implementation of the local place branding campaign and how the city continues to work with it to since 2006.

On the second day, the group explored the district's tourism offerings on Usedom. First, we visited the family hotel "Casa Familia," and afterward, the participants were able to get a firsthand look at tourism on the island during a visit to the beach.

After two very intensive days, the project partners headed back home, and we, as hosts, are looking forward to the next meeting in Poland this spring. Until then, work will continue locally on implementing the current work packages.

PARTNERS' NEWS

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

OPOLSKIE CENTRE FOR ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT (POL)

How can smaller towns encourage young people to stay, attract new talent and give former residents a reason to return? Krapkowice and Gogolin are looking for answers through Brand4Talents, an Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE project bringing together partners from Poland, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia.

The Opolskie Centre for Economy Development is responsible for implementing the project in the region, with Krapkowice and Gogolin selected for local project activities. One of the key outcomes will be a local action plan for attracting, retaining and bringing talent back to the area.

"A place brand should be based on what residents can actually find there: quality of life, career opportunities, leisure activities, access to services and opportunities for development," explains Marcin Staniszewski, Brand4Talents project leader.

For Krapkowice, the focus is on showing that a smaller town can combine attractive career prospects with a high quality of life.

"We want Krapkowice to be a place where talented people can see a future for themselves. We want to show that local employment opportunities can be comparable to those offered by larger urban areas," says Piotr Kudaś from the Krapkowice Town and Municipality Office.

Gogolin, meanwhile, is seeing both returning older residents and an inflow of young families who appreciate the accessibility and quality of local services.

"We are working to strengthen this trend and develop opportunities that encourage young people to stay. This is about work and development, but also everyday life, relationships and the feeling that you can pursue your plans in your own town," says Ewa Zdyb from the Gogolin Municipal Office.

The close relationship between Krapkowice and Gogolin is another important asset. Residents already use jobs, services, leisure, shopping and cultural opportunities across both towns. Short distances also mean less time spent commuting and more time for family, interests and community life.

Brand4Talents will help translate these strengths and lessons from European partners into concrete local actions, including cooperation with businesses, schools and young people, support for entrepreneurship, promotion of local career opportunities and stronger links with people who have left the region.

The goal is not simply to promote Krapkowice and Gogolin. It is to identify and strengthen the real reasons why talented people choose to stay, come or return.

Gain Time! Build connections! Discover Your Talent!

Krapkowice & Gogolin. Where Talent Grows.





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