



# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans November 2015

## EXPANDING THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM AND TEACHING SKILLS RELEVANT TO THE LABOUR MARKET



Students from a vocational school get their first taste of hands-on catering under the guidance of a chef. ©SDC

The SDC is working to ensure that jobseekers and insufficiently skilled workers are taught skills relevant to the labour market within the formal and non-formal vocational education and training system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training is geared to the needs of the various economic sectors, so that workers can be deployed in a targeted manner.

One of the major challenges for sustainable development in Bosnia and Herzegovina is high unemployment, especially youth unemployment. Currently at 28% (300,000 people), the country has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the region. Youth unemployment is as high as 59%. Every year some 25,000 school-leavers enter the job market. At this late stage it becomes clear that they are not prepared for the demands of the labour market. This is because the education system is generally not geared towards practical experience, so the skills they do acquire are scarcely relevant to the job market. As a result, despite the high unemployment rate many vacancies cannot be filled.

### SKILLS FOR JOBS: BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND LESS UNEMPLOYMENT ARE THE OVERARCHING GOALS

The project aims to expand the skills of vocational school students and improve the employment prospects of jobseekers. The project focuses on five cantons, Brčko District and two regions in the Republika Srpska. Skills for Jobs has the following two main goals:

- **Support for existing formal and informal vocational training centres and orientation of education to the needs of the labour market:** By the end of 2018 at least 3,000 unemployed young people and school-leavers will be given a permanent job after completing upper-secondary vocational school and further practical training. For this to be achieved, the curriculum of the training centres is driven by the needs of the labour market and is thus determined by demand from business. To implement this objective the project involves working closely with representatives of business sectors that provide the best prospects for the future in terms of employment and growth. Some of these include the light metals industry, the timber industry, the footwear sector, food processing, and hospitality and tourism. In addition, the practical side of training is being expanded in at least 20 state-run vocational training schools (VET schools).
- **Development of labour-market oriented curricula and work standards:** The development of labour-market oriented curricula and work standards is done in close collaboration with various stakeholders from the supply and demand sides. The stakeholders on the supply side include both VET schools and training centres in the private sector, while the demand side is represented

by firms and potential employers. The project thus generates needs-oriented modern training programmes which are driven by the actual work skills in demand.

Students train to be farmers in a practice-oriented vocational school. ©SDC



## RESULTS FROM THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT CONFIRM SUCCESS

To date, a total of eight training centres have been given support in six different industry sectors. The students in these centres are given practical problems to resolve, which equips them in the best way possible for the demands of the labour market. So far more than 500 people have completed the training, including 312 unemployed young people. 102 school-leavers have found permanent employment or at least a temporary job after completing the training programme.

A total of 38 curriculums and standardised tests have been developed and introduced. Many educators have taken courses in skills enhancement and the pool of experts now includes 80 specialists.

In order to ensure complete success, cooperating with all relevant stakeholders is key. The relevant actors include the public employment services, which are supported by the SDC.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

SDC activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina:  
[https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/laender/bosni-en\\_herzegowina.html](https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/laender/bosni-en_herzegowina.html)

## THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

### NAME

Skills for Jobs: skills relevant to the labour market

### DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

### THEME

Employment and income  
Vocational education and training

### COUNTRY/REGION

Bosnia and Herzegovina

### PARTNERS

RARS (Republic Agency for SME Development in Republika Srpska)  
Education ministries, Chambers of commerce  
Pedagogical institutes  
VET schools  
Municipal authorities

### BACKGROUND

Unemployment, in particular among young adults, is a major problem for the country. A reason for this is the outdated vocational education system, which is not geared towards the needs of the labour market, resulting in many job vacancies not being filled.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The project promotes a formal and informal education system that corresponds to the requirements of the labour market, in which low-skilled workers become more productive and the employability of jobseekers is improved.

### TARGET GROUP

Skills for Jobs is directed first and foremost at vocational schools, training centres and firms. By the end of 2018 some 6,000 unemployed young people and school-leavers will have completed their training at the centres.

### PHASE DURATION

Phase 2: 01.11.2014 – 31.10.2018

### PHASE BUDGET

Phase 2: CHF 6'300'000

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