ETF COUNTRY INFORMATION FICHE: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Basic country data:

Total population: 3,831,555

(Last available year: 2013, BHAS)

Young dependency ratio: 22.87 %

(Last available year: 2013, World Bank)

Public expenditure on education as share of GDP: 6.00 %

(Last available year: 2007, Council of Ministers of BiH (2008), Strateške Pravce Razvoja Obrazovanja u Bosni i Hercegovini sa Planom Implementiranja, 2008–2015, Sarajevo)

GDP per capita (current international $)


Employment rate 15+ (%) - BA

Source: BHAS, LFS.
Unemployment rate (%)

Source: BHAS, LFS.

Share of VET in secondary education (%)

Source: Unesco Institute of Statistics.
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has huge potential resources, including a strong human resource base, supporting infrastructure, an abundance of production facilities. With a population of around 3.8 million according to the census of October 2013, BiH is an upper middle-income economy. With a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.735 in 2012, BiH was ranked 81st out of 186 countries by the United Nations Development Programme UNDP in its Human Development Report 2013; thus it belongs to the group of countries with a high HDI. Demographic projections show that the labour force will shrink considerably in the next 40 years. BiH society is ageing at the fastest rate in the region, with the dependency ratio expected to rise to 55% by 2050. The country is ranked 13th in the world for outbound migration, with an emigration rate of 25%, according to the UNDP.

Large-scale development programmes and huge investment projects have been prepared in the energy, transport and tourism sectors in particular, requiring significant capital investments which BiH cannot afford by itself.

The involvement of strategic investors and the application of various business and investment models, such as concession arrangements, various public–private partnership (PPP) models, financing from specialised institutions such as the World Bank and the EBRD, represent possible solutions leading towards the achievement of these ambitious goals.

The tourism sector is perceived to be among the sectors in BiH with the highest competitive potential, given its economic significance: it accounts for 10% of GDP, both directly and indirectly generated, 16% of export earnings and over 8% of total employment. There have also been encouraging institutional developments, notably at the state level: a special department has been created in the Ministry for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations and a functional working group for coordination, reporting directly to the BiH Council of Ministers, has been set up. Additionally, the sector offers potential for fostering entrepreneurship and foreign investment and constitutes a good example of cross-sectoral cooperation (with environment, transport, rural development, etc.).

BiH submitted its Economic Reform programme in spring 2015. National stakeholders have advanced policies in vocational education and training with the potential to improve labour market outcomes (see more details below). Higher priority is to be given to responsiveness to the private sector/industry needs (especially SMEs) as well as to improving coordination and consultation between the different levels of government. The large public sector, with multiple overlapping competences and administrative structures at state, entity and municipal or cantonal level, should aim at becoming more agile.

VET and employment policy progress since 2012

The country is making progress in key policy areas.

A new VET strategy, which will cover the period 2015—2020, is under preparation.

In February 2015, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted an Action Plan for the development and implementation of the Qualifications Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014-2020. The Action Plan is an agenda for all the major activities for development and implementation of the Qualifications Framework (QF) in Bosnia and Herzegovina for all institutions and individuals, who will, in accordance with their respective competences, be involved in the development and implementation of the Qualifications Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Action Plan represents a relevant development as it provides a basis from which Bosnia and Herzegovina can approach education and training with a national perspective while enabling local initiatives as well as facilitating participation in EU initiatives, such as participation in the EQF and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF).

BiH started to implement the IPA 2012 project ‘Development of qualifications framework for general education in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ (with the support of British Council). The key aim is to support development of the qualifications framework for primary and general secondary education. In 2015

1 Foreign Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Investment opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, March 2012.
the project will assist education authorities in BiH to further develop standards for pupils’ and students’ achievements and to elaborate documents for the implementation of the external Matura examination at the end of general secondary education.

In the first quarter of 2015, the representatives from all entities completed the drafting of a comprehensive skills development policy strategy intended for consideration by the Council of Ministers in 2015. The skills strategy was the result of the analysis and work undertaken by the FRAME Initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina funded under the 2013 IPA MB envelope. The strategy covers five main priorities, including improved institutional and policy capacities. It comprises objectives, actions, and indicators and represents an approach, which will potentially complement the Action Plan for the Qualifications Framework (see above,) by providing a programme of labour market priorities that will reinforce those underway in education. Inter-sectoral groups representing all jurisdictions in the country prepared both initiatives. This means that since October 2014 national stakeholders co-operated in processes and activities that have the potential to steer policies in vocational education and training and the labour market in parallel directions with a common agenda.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is making good progress nationally on entrepreneurial learning but has continuing challenges on the teaching of enterprise skills for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

BiH strives for increased participation and relevance of adult education and two major strategic orientation documents were adopted in 2014 by the Council of Ministers: ‘Principles and standards in the field of adult education in BiH’ and ‘Strategic adult education development platform in the context of lifelong learning for the period 2014–2020’.

Country priorities for VET and employment reforms

- National Skills Strategy comprising priorities for
  - Skills Needs Identification,
  - Skills System Improvement,
  - Use of Knowledge in change process,
  - Skills links between business and society and improvements to public institutions and public private partnerships
- National Qualifications Framework development
- Adult learning
- Inclusive Education

ETF interventions

The national government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has approved a five year action plan for the creation of a national qualification framework (NQF). The ETF will contribute to the process by facilitating supporting national and local stakeholders dialogue on NQF’s development and implementation. The ETF will also provide expertise inputs in the preparation of the referencing of the NQF for Bosnia against the EQF.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is drafting a skills strategy to shape the further development of its education and training system, including its links with the labour market. The ETF is working with the relevant public authorities and the EU delegation to support its finalisation and its eventual implementation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina participates in ETF regional projects on entrepreneurial learning (SBA assessment), and on continuous professional development of teachers.

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2 The priorities are: Skills Needs Identification, Skills System Improvement, Use of Knowledge in change process, Skills links between business and society and improvements to public institutions and public private partnerships.
Support to the EU Delegation:

The ETF provide expertise contribution the IPA 2012 project.

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<th>EU projects</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>ETF role</th>
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<td>Development of Qualification Framework</td>
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Key Donors in VET and related support

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<td>GIZ</td>
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<td>Kultur Kontakt</td>
<td>Support to Vocational Education Strategy</td>
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<td>DVV</td>
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The German cooperation agency GIZ also contributes significantly towards improvements in VET. The ongoing GIZ ‘Promoting adult education’ project (total budget €4 million for the period 2010–2016) aims to improve formal, non-formal and informal adult education in BiH and link it to economic and social needs. Advice is provided to public and private adult training actors at regional level and ‘second chance’ education is improved for adults who did not complete primary education. Competency-based instruments for employment are introduced and career counselling strengthened.

ETF cooperates as well with Kultur Kontakt and DVV.

Publications

- ETF Torino Process report 2014
- ETF Frame Report: Vision 2020

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Further information

http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina

3 See for more info: http://eeas.europa.eu/bosnia_and_herzegovina/index_en.htm