



CO-HOST

D2.2. Training needs Report

Developed by P.2 Research Innovation and Development Lab (ReadLab)



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1. Executive summary

In the framework of *Work Package 2 (WP2)*, the CO-HOST partnership conducted research to detect specific VET training needs in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality at national level tapping into the VET national networks of Western Balkan countries. As part of the carried out Quantitative and qualitative research, ReadLab wrote a Research Protocol and shared it with the rest of the partners of the project. This document presented the topics and the methodology of research that would be conducted by the partners in their respective countries.

Thus, and as the given instructions were followed, three individual National Reports were created; one for Albania, one for Bosnia and Herzegovina and one for Kosovo. Those reports presented the current sets of circumstances and revealed the specific needs for VET training in hospitality and tourism at national and even regional level.

In this Training Needs Report, ReadLab collected and analysed the information presented in the National Reports, including the questionnaire and the Focus Group results, coming from quantitative and qualitative research. The survey method used an online questionnaire administered to 169 stakeholders. In the second case, the qualitative survey consisted of a focus group in each country (with a total of 39 experts/stakeholders involved) and, on the other, desk research and literature review on documents acquired from indirect sources. The identification of 5 initiatives in sustainable tourism completed the secondary research work.

At the end of the report, several conclusions are listed based on the research and analysis carried out. The main ones can be summarised as follows:

- It is necessary to invest greater efforts in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and to establish a strong partnership with local tourism companies with a greater focus on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness.
- There is a need to create synergies with local or regional communities and private companies, to ensure that educational opportunities (incl. paid internships) are offered widely in the country.
- There is a need for a highly skilled workforce.
- There is a need to support the private sector by restructuring existing programmes, aiming at fast, efficient and short-term training solutions.
- There is an urgent need for intensive on-the-job training of VET staff.
- Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, the use of quality assurance tools and developing VET internationalization strategies are among the most sought-after technical skills. Whereas integration of technology in teaching, up-to-date research skills, knowledge of instructional design and self-assessment/evaluation are the most sought-after pedagogical ones. Communication critical thinking, and teamwork are identified as key soft skills.
- It also became apparent that potential users do not have sufficient knowledge to write project proposals and have difficulties in finding partners and funding or designing mobility programs in the European context.
- There is a need to implement fully a qualification framework and match existing qualifications to learning outcomes and to standards to align it to the European qualification framework.

Some final recommendations, resulting from the research conducted through the needs analysis in all partner countries, lead us to the conclusion that it would be necessary:

1. To invest in programs and initiatives designed for teaching staff specifically addressing tourism and sustainability.
2. To restructure VET systems to allow for fast, efficient and short-term training solutions of VET students.
3. To establish memoranda of collaboration between local or regional communities, educational centres and private companies to a) share information and b) align curriculum with the labor market.
4. To enhance international mobility the VET schools and institutions in the regions, putting aside the EU- and the Schengen limitations.
5. To organise continuous on-the-job training of VET staff focusing on critical technical, pedagogical and soft skills including mentoring on EU programmes and tools (especially with regard to mobilities and recognition of learning outcomes). Those skills include:

Technical skills

- a. Adaptability to new technologies and software applications,
- b. The use of quality assurance tools
- c. Developing VET internationalization strategies

Pedagogical skills

- d. Integration of technology in teaching, up-to-date research skills,
- e. Knowledge of instructional design
- f. Self-assessment/evaluation

Soft skills

- g. Communication
- h. Critical thinking
- i. Teamwork

2. Introduction

2.1 About the project

The overall objective of the CO-HOST project (“Creating Opportunities for VET mobility in HOSpitality and Tourism”), is to support the realization of mobility projects between EU member states and WB countries, aimed at the enhancement of skills and competences of VET learners, in order to improve and modernize the VET system in enlargement countries. The project focuses on the topic of **Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality**, with a strong emphasis on **green and entrepreneurial skills**.

CO-HOST aims:

- To share best practices among VET providers coming from EU and enlargement countries, encouraging the involvement of VET providers in EU cooperation and mobility projects;
- To improve technical and pedagogical skills of VET staff from enlargement countries;
- To improve technical, transversal and soft skills of VET students from enlargement countries, in order to improve their occupational prospects;
- To establish Solid National Networks in the WB Countries.

The project’s target groups are the following:

- VET teachers;
- VET providers involved in the national networks;
- trade unions;
- business associations in the field of tourism;
- catering and hospitality

A preliminary needs assessment was conducted at proposal level showing a strong dependence of the VET systems and an insufficient level of innovation in Western Balkan countries. It also showed the need to deepen the certification and quality systems, in particular by refining the assessment based on learning outcomes.

2.2 Objectives

In the framework of the above, CO-HOST will conduct further research to detect specific VET training needs in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality at national level tapping into the VET national networks of Western Balkan countries formed under task 2.2.

The objectives linked to the implementation of *task 2.3. Quantitative and qualitative research* are:

In general:

- To assess the training needs
- To identify the learning needs and political bottlenecks
- To organise the training activities and content

Specifically:

- To capture data in WB countries regarding the training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and the opportunities of tourism for the development of the region
- To detect and map existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

These activities led to the development of the **deliverable 2.2. Training needs Report**, under *task 2.4 Elaboration of the training needs analysis report*, to the development of the **deliverable 2.2. Training needs Report**. The report summarizes information collected from the national reports, as well as specific learning needs and political constraints for the development of the VET system in the WB area. In addition, the training needs report is the starting point for the development of the capacity-building and internationalisation activities.

The research methodology is presented in the following sections. Research tools, such as questionnaires, and the national report guidelines are provided as annexes.

3. Methodology

For the national training needs reports, all three countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, followed the project framework that ReadLab developed and provided within the Research Protocol of CO-HOST. Thus, the partner-countries applied mixed methodological quantitative and qualitative research methods of data collection and analysis in order to get the best results. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 included data collection where all research activities were running in parallel. Phase 2 included analysis of the data collected in phase 1. The first stage of the analysis is presented in the national reports. The second stage of the analysis is presented in this Training Needs Report.

All partners worked in a hybrid way, both remotely and in-person, in order to collect the required data. For the quantitative data, a structured questionnaire was distributed online for teaching staff and trainers in VET schools and VET provider institutions in all countries to answer. For the qualitative part of data collection, they conducted focus groups discussions and other formal or informal interviews as well as literature review and desk research for additional information. Similarly, Kosovo applied semi structured questions for interviews for the qualitative part of the research. More information about the online survey sample and composition of the focus group is presented in the respective chapters.

4. Results

4.1 Literature review and desk research

Technical information

The Literature review and desk research included information from different online resources, newspapers, journal articles, conference proceedings, official government sources, school textbooks, NGOs' official documents and data, professional and academic resources, institutional stakeholders' statistics, and technical reports. For B&H, the research was conducted at entity and district level which includes Federation BiH, Republica Srpska and Brčko District covering the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Literature review and desk research

- National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>Albania is facing two skills challenges. First, there is the low level of skills of the working age population. The second challenge is related to the workforce's possession of the skills required in the labor market, the lack of which can prevent the creation of more or better quality jobs. Some of the key indicators of a potential skills mismatch can be considered: (i) high unemployment rate among young people and high unemployment rate of graduates from higher education; (ii) The high rate of young people who are neither in employment, nor in education or training (iii) The percentage of businesses that face difficulties in recruitment.</p> <p>The Western Balkans is one of the regions with the highest level of unemployment in Europe, especially in terms of recent graduates, and this is one of the most important reasons leading to the mass exodus of young people from the countries of the region. The vertical discrepancy between the educational level and the employment of graduates continues to be high in BP countries, namely around 47% for the year 2021. This is a consequence of the insufficient orientation of education to the needs of the labor market and is related with very poor practical training of students.</p> <p>As part of the EU integration agenda of Albania, the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2022 was developed and adapted by the end of 2014, and even got extended after getting reviewed in 2018. The main objective of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 – 2022 and its action plan is to identify and design the right policies that promote employment in the country and vocational training of the labour force. The action plan focuses on increasing opportunities for decent jobs through efficient labour market policies, offering quality vocational education and training opportunities for youth and adults, promoting social inclusion and cohesion, and strengthening the labour market and qualification system. Following this strategic path will lead to interconnect the VET and employment services. It aims at the formation of a high-quality workforce with emphasis in public policies and in accordance with the Albanian Qualifications Framework. The main efforts of the responsible institutions were focused on the reorganization and optimization of the network of public VET providers, in order to expand the VET offer, in the context of lifelong learning.</p> <p>In addition, the government program of 2017 - 2021 had placed focus on employment and quality development of the labour force, in accordance with the EU vision, directives, requirements and strategies.</p>

In Albania, Law No. 15/2017 on "Education and Vocational Training in the Republic of Albania" was approved, which aims to:

- to create a developed VET system that responds to socio-economic and technological changes, in the conclusion of such a real workplace system.
- to create sustainable insurance and guarantee of students in professional education, in the standards of the European Union.
- to modernize the VET system, making it a more and more effective mechanism for the creativity of the rhythms of the effectiveness of the economy of the Albanian society, ensuring its compatibility with the educational system and the labor market.
- to guarantee equal opportunities for all those who want to study at the VET.

However, regardless of the drafting and implementation of the law, the National Strategy as a supporting document of the legal framework, the establishment of the National Employment and Skills Agency, even though the number of post-secondary study programs and registered students continues to grow and the continuous support that this sector has had from various projects and collaborations from European partners and beyond, the Albanian practice has shortcomings in all three aspects:

- regulation is not perfect, attention from public authorities is insufficient and the relationship between educational institutions and employers is minimal.
- education is not sufficiently oriented towards the needs of the labor market.
- curricula are too theoretical; students' practical training is weak and workplace learning is not well organized.

The conclusion is that the current post-secondary system needs to be improved in order to better respond to the needs of the labor market and students.

If we rely on the initiatives taken in recent years, we can find other data on the developments of this sector, such as the one from the head of the Regional Challenges Fund, who confirms that he has encountered a considerable number and sectoral diversity of interests to develop in this sector. This shows that the reforms undertaken in recent years in the vocational education and training (VET) system in Albania in coordination with donor support have improved the image and quality of the VET system, its accessibility and relevance in the labor market. These efforts, which have influenced the increase in productivity and competitiveness in the region and beyond, are creating a **stable base towards increasing the quality of skilled employees by cooperating closely with the Vocational Training Institutes (VTI).**

B&H

There are three Strategies for tourism development, namely the **Strategy for Tourism Development in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2027**; the **Strategy for Tourism Development 2021-2027 in Republica Srpska**, and the **Strategy for Tourism Development in Brčko District BiH 2021-2027**.

All Strategies prioritise on the one hand, **human resources development** with necessary mid-term and long-term measures to increase the number of qualified employees in the sector through education and training, and **improvement of existing personnel** through formal and non-formal education and training in the workplace, as well as **keeping the qualified workforce** which was identified as one of the major issues in this industry. Beside these three formal documents, there is a clear intention and dedication of the national level portrayed in the Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007 – 2013, adopted on April 11, 2007 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the EU VET II project to **reform this area based on the EU CARDS program in B&H and the best practices of EU countries** (e.g. Slovenia and Denmark).

	<p>There is constant progress in the field of harmonizing curricula with the labor market in terms of cooperation between schools and employers by establishing advisory councils in schools and tripartite councils at the entity, canton, or Brčko District level of Bosnia and Herzegovina which can contribute to better cooperation between education and the labor market, admissions policy and more employability of students completing vocational education.</p>
KOSOVO	<p>The considerations of the OECD (2021) are that “Deficiencies in the education system and mismatches between the labour market and field of study means Kosovo suffers skills shortages despite high unemployment rates for people of all skill levels. Kosovo should use its whole education and training infrastructure, including vocational education and training (VET), to provide adults with remedial education and improve their vocational skills”. There is another research finding that concludes that “most of the young people are not equipped with the adequate skills to be competitive in the labor market because they pursue careers without deliberately examining the needs of the market for those particular professions” (Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo: Challenges and Opportunities, (2019).</p> <p>In relation to pedagogical and technical skills, especially in tourism, it is noted that skills are not classified by labour category. Following EC (2001) except educational background the managerial level in business is expected to possess the following skills and competences: “computer skills, business and strategic planning, strategic alliances, management skills, management through visions and values, yield management, accounting, product development, innovation, human resource management, destination management, project management, management skills to cope with globalisation influences, change management, marketing and sales skills”.</p> <p>In detecting training needs, and in devising measures it is required to design proper educational curriculum. As per Tahirsylaj and Fazliu (2021) the country is still in the early phase of developing curriculum expertise. Moreover, another research reveals that “curriculum policy making in Kosovo has relied on adoption and borrowing of a set of policies promoted by international organizations without much attention to the educational perspectives that historically and traditionally frame specific goals of education and definition of educational content” (Tahirsylaj & Fazliu ,2021).</p>

Table 1 Secondary research findings: National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills

- VET staff learning needs and constraints

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>The professional development of VET teachers and trainers has been identified by the European Training Foundation as a key driver for improving VET systems in all regions: firstly, because they are the most important contribution important in the VET system; secondly, teachers and trainers are critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, such as changes in organizations, curricula and development of work-based learning, technology and pedagogy.</p> <p>There is the need for ongoing professional development through continuous training programs of VET directors, teachers and support staff. To work on expanding the network with other European partners and to keep it active in sharing the experiences and knowledge.</p>
B&H	<p>According to the current legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, teachers holding positions in vocational schools are grouped into two main categories: teachers assigned to positions of general education subjects; and those assigned to positions in professional subjects (teachers and experienced assistants). Procedures and</p>

realization of professional training of teachers are regulated by secondary legal acts of competent educational authorities, as well as the responsibilities of teachers and the way of evaluating their work. Records on professional development of teachers are kept by schools, and in almost all existing regulations, a certain number of points are provided for professional development in the evaluation of teachers. However, it seems that **teacher training was, and still is to a certain extent, a considerably neglected component of VET reform in the country, particularly in relation to the education of VET teachers.** National policies and international programmes currently focus on this second area as a top priority.

The Ministry of Education and the pedagogical institutes provide regular in-service training for teachers, but there are problems with resources, quality, motivation, organisation and other issues. All pedagogical institutes responsible for professional teacher training are struggling with the issue of **limited human resources.** This means **seminars and workshops are only organised for a reduced range of subjects, while teachers of other disciplines rarely get the opportunity for any training.** Assistance provided by the EU and other donors is very influential on this front.

An additional problem for secondary schools is that many teachers of technical or specific disciplines come directly from non-teaching faculties into service in secondary vocational schools with **no adequate preparation for professional teaching.** New teachers therefore arrive unprepared to face students and unable to use modern teaching techniques. The inadequate professional development of established teachers does little to improve the situation and information provided by a series of strategies and documents developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last decade clearly underline a complex situation. There is an urgent **need not only for thorough reform of pre-service teacher training but also for intensive in-service training.** Bosnia and Herzegovina has a range of political, structural, administrative, organisational and educational peculiarities that mean the issue of teacher training must be approached differently from how it is tackled in other countries.

It is **necessary to ensure procedures for the accreditation of teacher training programs, and the creation of professional training catalogues** since these elements are still not fully part of practice. However, the existence of positive examples and practices at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the fact that the professional training of teachers is regulated by secondary legal acts opens up space for the improvement of procedures through their amendment and supplementation. The developed professional standards for primary and secondary school teachers, in the preparation of which representatives of relevant ministries, pedagogical institutes, higher education institutions and teachers from all cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brčko District participated, represent a good basis for the further development of the teaching profession.

KOSOVO

The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE) is responsible for ensuring the administration and leadership of Institutions of Vocational Education Training and for Adults (IVETA). The National Qualification Authority is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Kosovo Qualification Framework and its relationship with the European Qualification Framework. It also regulates the award of qualifications and accreditation of VET providers to ensure the overall quality system for VET in Kosovo.

The VET staff learning needs identified at national level include the following: **digital/blended learning and online learning** so that it would enable VET providers to use modes that suit their needs. The next skill required is **learning of foreign languages and adequate communication and presenting skills.** Finally, VET providers need to develop further their **research skills** in developing research topics and being able to write research proposals including appropriate methodology.

The main difficulties identified at national level are the **financing and operating of VET schools**. It has a large cost. In addition, there is no fund available for research at these schools, advancement of staff learning needs such as learning new technology applications or communication skills.

Table 2 Secondary research findings: VET staff learning needs and constraints

- Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector

The national standards of quality assurance and the qualification frameworks are different in each case and national system. Thus Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo offered the necessary information for the quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector, as summarized below.

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>In the traditional VET system in Albania, the assessment of professional skills has been (and continues to be) the responsibility of individual VET providers and their teachers, under the supervision of the state governing body which also determines the assessment instruments. and testing. From the point of view of the system, the most hindering factors are identified as:</p> <p>The evaluation standards determined by the National Agency of this sector are mainly based on the subjects defined in the framework curriculum rather than on learning outcomes. The European Qualifications Framework proposes a shift from the traditional input-based system paradigm towards outcome-based learning design (curriculum) and outcome-based assessment models.</p> <p>Domain experts from industry are not involved in the design of test items. Test items may have different difficulties (memorization, functional understanding and problem solving), which affect the quality and results of the tests.</p> <p>There is no accreditation procedure for VET providers to verify their capacity to function as an assessment centre. VET is considered a collaborative task between the government and the private sector. Cooperation can be made mandatory by law, but it would never be as efficient as it would be if it were based on mutual interest. Therefore, it is suggested to increase the voluntary contribution of companies and experts in the field to provide their input and expertise in determining performance parameters, to measure professional competencies, and in participating in the procedures of a real evaluation.</p> <p>As a candidate country for the EU, Albania has committed to develop a mechanism for quality assurance in VET that guarantees the provision of a skilled workforce, which increases the efficiency and competitiveness of the Albanian labor market, and for the integration of young people in society through increased employability and mobility. Quality assurance is a cross-sectoral task. The foreign donor community has supported Albanian actors with a series of pilot projects to test models and approaches of a quality assurance system for VET in Albania. Despite all the progress achieved, the reality of VET still does not reflect the ambitious scenarios defined in the legal framework. The dialogue between policy makers and the implementation level is still fragmented and disconnected. The involvement of the private sector is still limited to pilot projects initiated by donors or is based on the efforts of individual schools and is not yet systemic.</p> <p>Major deficiencies in quality assurance of the Albanian VET system: Lack of a coherent national model for quality assurance, including monitoring and guidance</p>

	<p>mechanisms, to ensure that training delivery at the implementation level follows national standards; The role of the private sector in quality assurance is very limited and not clearly defined; There are no national standards (training regulations) that define the minimum quality criteria for professional practice and internship programs; VET schools are expected to become innovative engines in the reform process, with greater autonomy to respond more directly and quickly to the demands of local/regional labor market.</p>
B&H	<p>Qualifications and quality assurance Bosnia and Herzegovina’s baseline qualifications framework was adopted by the Council of Ministers in March 2011. Qualifications are currently derived primarily from occupational standards, but the Bosnia and Herzegovina qualifications framework provides an opportunity to adapt the VET system to better meet the needs of employers by adopting a more sector-specific approach to qualifications in line with the needs of the economy. The Bosnia and Herzegovina qualifications framework has only been partially implemented and no qualifications have been registered. Many existing qualifications are not based on learning outcomes, nor do they relate to standards. Training providers, employers and learners still do not use the framework. Nonetheless, newly developed VET and higher education qualifications are based on learning outcomes and standards. Four qualifications have been formally included in the framework. The implementation of the baseline qualifications framework is overseen by an inter-sectoral committee chaired by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. A further milestone to be met by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities is to reference the baseline qualifications framework to the principles and criteria of the wider European Qualifications Framework. The validation of non-formal learning is part of the qualifications’ framework action plan, but its implementation is currently limited. EU support to develop a system-based validation of non-formal learning is scheduled for the period 2020–2022. There are no quality assurance mechanisms in place to systematically monitor the quality of education inputs, outputs or outcomes (World Bank, 2019). However, the first steps towards a state-wide quality assurance framework for VET have been taken with a framework proposal developed in 2018, which borrows from European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET). As with the baseline qualifications framework, the quality assurance framework is designed to bring together the various education authorities and to act as a bridge to broader European developments and EU quality assurance networks (ETF, 2019). The proposal includes the furnishing of data by all education authorities (Cantons, Republika Srpska and Brčko District). The Bosnia and Herzegovina education authorities have not yet agreed to this proposal (Country Fiche 2020BiH)</p> <p>According to the official Document "Improving the quality and relevance of professional education and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina" - based on the Riga Conclusions (2021 - 2030), one of the outlined priorities is the Qualifications for everyone with listed activities of developing new qualifications; ensuring balance between the necessary skills and job specific competencies; developing modular and flexible curricula which may contribute to the strengthening of the vocational education and training and the mobility of students. The flexibility of professional education and training is made possible if the curricula and programs consist of relevant optional professional modules and not only compulsory ones, of which many should be conducted separately and through adult education and, if possible, offered as elective or optional modules for general education students as well.</p> <p>Another listed priority is Promotion of the role and importance of key competencies in VET education with the ongoing activity of Participating in EU student exchange programs in the area of certain competencies encouraging schools to become more active in utilizing the EU exchange opportunities.</p>
KOSOVO	<p>The purpose of the education and instruction system is offering teaching and gaining learning that takes place in school education. The component of the system is grounded on curriculum. The criteria on standards expected from schools and the</p>

	<p>learning outcomes of students, including assessment tools and modes, and other elements that support instruction such as field visits, field projects, internships or mobility facilitate the learning process.</p> <p>The National Qualification Framework (NQF) provides a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition between the NQF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). NQA is the designated National Coordination Point for participation in the EQF process (National Qualification Authority, 2020).</p> <p>In terms of tourism quality of mobility and recognition of learning outcomes, Kandiah (2016) suggests enhancement of “co-operation between the government, academia and the private sector by establishing a tourism skills council in order to bridge the skills gap in tourism and enhance employer awareness about the benefits of employee training”. Hence, there is no relevant national data that would enable us to refer and address quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET schools at national level except the identified “gap between Kosovar and German qualification standards considered to be wide during the YES project period 2017-2021” Global Skills Partnership (2021).</p>
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Table 3 Secondary research findings: Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector

- VET initiatives in sustainable tourism and marketing

A selection of initiatives in the sustainable tourism and marketing sectors is being presented section below.



	'Skills for Jobs' (S4J)	'AL-VET – Quality for All': High-quality and socially inclusive vocational education and training in Albania	Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (TURIZAM)	Training for the labour market "Fit for Jobs"	KSV/020 Support to Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform in Kosovo
Short Description	The project aims aim is to upgrade vocational education and training (VET) in Albania through digitalization, modernization and inclusiveness.	By increasing the quality of and the access to vocational training in the tourism and hospitality and IT sectors the project contributes to increasing the employability of disadvantaged groups of people in Albania.	The project is working on advancing human capital in the tourism sector, improving access to finance for tourism businesses, developing innovative tourist products, harmonizing policies and regulations and revolutionizing destination branding and promotion.	The project aims to improve the employability of the youth in Kosovo.	The project supports the reorganisation and strengthening of the governance structure of the VET system in Kosovo and the creation of a partnership between businesses and VET institutions to help students' practical learning skills.
Location	Albania	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	Kosovo
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	Swisscontact Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania	OeAD Albanian Ministry of Finance and Economy, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications, National Agency for Employment and Skills and other Albanian educational institutions the Regional Office Tirana	USAID in BiH Chemonics International	German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers (MFLT).	Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency MISTI
Timeframe	July 2023 – June 2027 (phase 3)	2021-2024	2020-2025	2021-2024	2018-2022
Target groups	Educational directions and profiles Teachers Students Partner businesses	Schools of vocational education and training for tourism and hospitality and IT teachers, headmasters and headmistresses, business liaison officers, quality development officers, gender officers; boarding schools for pupils; Companies in the tourism/hospitality and IT sectors.	Public sector Local governments higher education institutions People with disabilities, cultural institutions DODATI	Specialists and managers of selected lower secondary and vocational schools Young workers	National/ministry level and level of training institutions
Supporting Stakeholders	Local companies; resorts and hotels, restaurants and traditional ones; public institutions and agencies; travel agencies; Industry Associations; Public and Private Universities; high schools.	Local companies of Hospitality - Tourism and IT sectors; travel agencies; Industry Association; high schools.	Local, cantonal, entity, district and national governmental institutions DODATI	German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)	Luxembourg Government
Sources of funding	Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF) GIZ	OeAD	USAID	N/A	Luxembourg Government MEST



	Delegation of the European Union to Albania				
Description of activities	<p>During the second phase, the project focused more on transferring good practices to more VET providers; empowering institutions and creating a culture to drive change as a constant part of their work and bringing private sector companies to the heart of the institution and get them actively engaged on school board, in the processes of curricula update and offer diversification and establishing a norm in providing apprenticeships for school students. In Phase 3 (July 2023 – June 2027) the project aims to amplify past achievements, ensuring sustainable VET changes and fostering a brighter future for Albania, while also offering improved opportunities to approximately 29,400 Albanian individuals, encompassing women, men, youth, and special needs groups</p>	<p>Training of teachers in the organisation of practice- and skills-oriented practical lessons; Development of teaching/learning material; Training of companies in the organisation of high-quality internships; Development of a training course for school quality coordinators; Development of new job profiles, descriptions of qualifications and curricula are available in a piloted form; Development of tools for effective career guidance and career counselling and skills enabling their application in vocational education and training; Training of School coordinators and headmasters; Development of a cooperation network for the expansion of business contacts in Albania.</p>	<p>Fostering rural tourism, establishing international standards and criteria, supporting world-class events, advancing digital marketing in tourism sector, bringing best practices from global leaders, global promotion and be-to-be networking, creating world-class tourism products and experiences, modernizing vocational education for excellence in hospitality</p>	<p>Fit for Jobs focuses on supporting career orientation in the lower secondary schools, on strengthening digital competencies at school level. Moreover, the project supports the qualification of VET teachers and strengthens the role of chambers and sector associations. Also through the project an Awareness Campaign will take place and the capacities of labor market institutions will be strengthened. Last but not least, the project supports the implementation of labor market guidelines and supports MESTI and MFLT in anchoring career guidance and labor market orientation in VET.</p>	<p>The project aimed to modernise the curricula offered by the training centres in Kosovo. It focused on revising of programs in the fields of hotels and restaurants (among others).</p> <p>During its second phase, KSV/020 also created Centre of Competence, which is the first public school entirely devoted to information and communication technologies in Kosovo.</p>
Conclusions	<p>The establishment and the cooperation between VET institutions in Albania and the private sector companies has been positive so far. SJ4, specifically, has helped a lot in this collaboration and many contracts were signed so that students could do their practice and different tasks were assigned to them to perform in the respective companies. As a result of this, they feel more confident and valued at the same time.</p> <p>OeAD, apart from emphasizing the importance of inclusion of girls and women in different professions, provided the training of the VET school teachers. They are more informed about the latest technology,</p>	<p>Through this initiative, new guidelines for school self-evaluation in vocational education and training will be designed. Continuous school quality improvement will be fostered, since 34 schools of vocational education and training in Albania will be able to use self-evaluation results. Moreover thanks to the 'AL-VET – Quality for All' initiative, gender inclusion will increase girls' access and will provide equitable opportunities in vocational education and training in Albania as well as in the labor market.</p>	<p>USAID Tourism initiative will contribute to economic growth and social harmony in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through a broad-based approach to sustainable tourism development.</p>	<p>Kosovo is a country that aims on its EU integration, while having inherited features from its Yugoslav past. This naturally affects its systematic character and its path to an independent, modernized and interlinked with globalization future. The governance structure of Kosovo's VET system is nowadays getting reorganized on strong foundations. This is supported by projects and initiatives such as "Fit for Jobs".</p>	<p>The KSV/020 project contributed to establishing networks and created relationships between schools and the actors of the communities in which they operate. The project contributed to the creation of public-private partnerships that optimised the VET system and at the same time work experience opportunities were created. Thus, it can be concluded that the KSV/020 project led to the transformation of the VET system in the country.</p>

	<p>which is helpful regarding teaching methods and improved performance.</p> <p>Also, curricula is updated according to the student's needs and the best European standards. This has helped raising the numbers of girls and women in the education sector.</p>				
Links and references	https://skillsforjobs.al/	https://oead.at/en/cooperations/educational-cooperation-with-eastern-and-south-eastern-europe/educational-cooperation-partner-countries/albania https://www.facebook.com/oead.tirana	https://bit.ly/3RS8qHT	https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/103577.html	https://luxdev.lu/en/activities/project/KSV/020
Contact person	info@skillsforjobs.al		info@turizambih.ba	Tobias Seiberlich: tobias.seiberlich@giz.de	LuxDev, tel (+352) 29 58 58 1



Online survey sample

The questionnaire was administered online, and it was disseminated by the partner organisations of the project. The majority of the respondents came from the education sector and a small percentage from the field of tourism. More information about the sample of the online survey can be found in the below table.

COUNTRY	RESPONSES	SECTOR	POSITION	AGE GROUP	GENDER
ALBANIA	65	Education (64%) Other (6%)	Vocational Education and Training provider (56%) Other entries (29%) Adult trainer (9%) Office administrator/support (4%) Tour organizer (4%)	50-64 (42%) 35-49 (40%) 25-34 (15%) 18-24 (3%)	Female (77%) Male (23%)
B&H	64	Education (84%) Business associations/providers in the field of tourism (9%) Other (3%) Catering and hospitality (2%)	Vocational Education and Training provider (48%) Adult trainer (16%) Other (26%) Office administrator/support (5%) Accommodator/hospitality manager (5%)	50-64 (38%) 35-49 (53%) 25-34 (6%) 18-24 (3%)	Female (83%) Male (17%)
KOSOVO	40	Education (93%) Trade unions (3%) Business associations/providers in the field of tourism (3%) Other (1%)	Vocational Education and Training provider (72%) Adult trainer (14%) Professional in the Business Support Services (5%) Other (7%) Tour organizer (2%)	50-64 (45%) 35-49 (35%) 25-34 (15%) 18-24 (5%)	Female (63%) Male (35%) Prefer not to say (3%)

Table 4 Online survey sample information

Online survey results

The following tables provide the questions of the questionnaire and the main responses collected through data processing. By “main” we refer to the most recurring responses with a higher percentage of agreement. Therefore, the tables have an indicative value and can only be considered useful to define a general representation of the dynamics that characterize tourist systems and to highlight the issues considered most important by the respondents. For a more detailed overview of the responses, please refer to the total survey results provided in annex.

The results are categorised in the following topics:

- Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of tourism labour market

Question		Albania	B&H	Kosovo
1	Are you familiar with sustainable tourism?	Yes (80%) No (20%)	Yes (75%) No (25%)	Yes (48%) No (53%)
2	Which of the following actions/measures should be implemented to make tourism in your sector more attractive? (please choose up to 3 answers)	Establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses (23%) Safeguard cultural and natural heritage (22%) Provide innovative digital solutions (14%)	Safeguard cultural and natural heritage (21%) Establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses (18%) Focus more on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness (18%)	Provide innovative digital solutions (18%) Establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses (15%) Safeguard cultural and natural heritage (24%)
3	Which of the following actions/measures should be implemented to make vocational education in your sector more attractive? (Please choose up to 3 answers)	Continuous education of VET staff in mobility activities (26%) Participation of VET learners in mobility activities (24%) Participation of VET staff to mobility activities (23%)	Continuous education of VET staff in mobility activities (29%) Participation of VET learners in mobility activities (22%) Promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women (19%)	Continuous education of VET staff in mobility activities (26%) Participation of VET learners in mobility activities (25%) Participation of VET staff to mobility activities (20%)
4	Please select the most relevant technical skills in your sector. (Please choose up to 3 answers)	Adaptability to new technologies and software applications (32%)	Developing VET internationalization strategies (34%) Adaptability to new technologies and	Developing VET internationalization strategies (35%) Adaptability to new technologies and

		Developing VET internationalization strategies (30%) Using quality assurance instruments (22%)	software applications (31%) Using quality assurance instruments (20%)	software applications (27%) Using quality assurance instruments (20%)
5	Please select the most relevant pedagogical skills in your sector. (Please choose up to 3 answers)	Integration of technology in teaching (36%) Research skills (27%) Self-assessment/evaluation as a reactive process (27%)	Integration of technology in teaching (32%) Research skills (26%) Instructional design (24%)	Integration of technology in teaching (38%) Research skills (30%) Self-assessment/evaluation as a reactive process (24%)
6	Please select the most relevant soft skills in your sector. (Please choose up to 3 answers)	Communication skills (28%) Critical thinking (12%) Teamwork (11%)	Communication skills (25%) Critical thinking (15%) Teamwork (15%)	Communication skills (23%) Teamwork (16%) Critical thinking (12%)

Table 5 Online survey results: Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of tourism labour market

- EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

Questions		Albania	B&H	Kosovo
1	How beneficial do you find the knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education?	Very useful (78%) Useful (18%) Neutral (3%)	Useful (50%) Very useful (36%) Neutral (11%) Not useful (3%)	Very useful (75%) Useful (23%) Neutral (3%)
2	Do you have experience with international mobility of staff?	No (82%) Yes (18%)	No (84%) Yes (16%)	No (75%) Yes (25%)
3	If yes, please point out the type of mobility you had experience with:	Teaching or training assignments (2 to 365 days) for teachers (58%)	Courses and training (2 to 30 days) (60%) Teaching or training assignments (2 to 365)	Courses and training (2 to 30 days) (60%) Job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers (20%)

		Job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers (33%) In-depth sectoral specialization of VET teachers (8%)	days) for teachers (40%) Job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers (0%)	Teaching or training assignments (2 to 365 days) for teachers (20%)
4	Have you designed, managed and coordinated mobility arrangements and projects for learners?	No (69%) Yes (31%)	No (86%) Yes (14%)	No (60%) Yes (40%)
5	Which of the following aspects do you find most challenging when organizing and conducting international VET mobility?	Finding partners for proposals (23%) Funding/ co-funding (22%) Project proposal writing and submission (22%)	Project proposal writing and submission (27%) Funding/ co-funding (25%) Issues related to the organization of the working/learning program (16%)	Funding/ co-funding (35%) Issues related to the organization of the working/learning program (20%) Project proposal writing and submission (18%)
6	Which of the following do you consider as benefits from international VET mobilities for a VET provider?	Boosted quality of the educational services provided (34%) Boosted attractiveness of the organisation/institution (17%) Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (17%)	Boosted quality of the educational services provided (28%) Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (25%) Boosted prospects for international cooperation (14%)	Boosted quality of the educational services provided (28%) Boosted attractiveness of the organisation/institution (20%) Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (18%)
7	Which of the following do you consider as benefits for participants/learners in international VET mobilities?	Boosted skills, knowledge and competences relevant to their current/future occupation (46%) Widened personal and professional horizons (22%)	Boosted skills, knowledge and competences relevant to their current/future occupation (50%) Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (16%)	Boosted skills, knowledge and competences relevant to their current/future occupation (43%) Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (18%)

		Improved career prospects (11%)	Improved career prospects (9%)	Improved career prospects (15%)
8	Are you aware of EU instruments for their cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility (i.e. ECVET process)?	No (78%) Yes (22%)	No (83%) Yes (17%)	No (70%) Yes (30%)
9	If applicable, do you need support in defining and implementing them?	No (55%) Yes (45%)	No (67%) Yes (33%)	No (55%) Yes (45%)
10	Would you be interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes?	Yes (77%) No (12%) N/A (11%)	Yes (72%) N/A (14%) No (14%)	Yes (78%) N/A (18%) No (5%)
11	If yes, specify why:	I want to learn something new (47%) I want to improve my existing knowledge (45%)	I want to improve my existing knowledge (69%) I want to learn something new (29%)	I want to improve my existing knowledge (58%) I want to learn something new (32%)

Table 6 Online survey results: EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

- **VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing**

Question	Albania	B&H	Kosovo
Are you aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in your country?	No (88%) Yes (12%)	No (95%) Yes (5%)	No (98%) Yes (2%)

Table 7 Online survey results: VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Online survey summary

- As shown above, most respondents are familiar with sustainable tourism and prioritise establishing strong partnerships with local tourism businesses, safeguarding cultural and natural heritage and providing innovative digital solutions as the best actions to make tourism more attractive.
- All survey respondents selected continuous education of VET staff in mobility activities and participation of VET learners in mobility activities to make vocational education more attractive. Respondents from Albania and Kosovo prioritised also participation of VET staff in mobility activities, whereas respondents from B&H prioritised Promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women.
- All survey respondents agreed that the most relevant technical skills include developing VET internationalization strategies; Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, Using quality assurance instruments.
- All respondents agreed that the most relevant pedagogical skills are the integration of technology in teaching and research skills. Self-assessment/evaluation as a reactive process was also prioritised by Albanian and Kosovar respondents, whereas B&H respondents selected instructional design.
- All respondents selected communication skills, critical thinking, and teamwork as the most relevant soft skills.
- Most respondents do not have experience with EU mobility programs, however they agree on the importance of knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education and would be interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes. They also found that mobility programs boost the quality of the educational services provided, the attractiveness of the organisation/institution, and improve access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches of VET providers. On the other hand, they boost skills, knowledge and competences of mobility participants (relevant to their current/future occupation), provide access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches and improve career prospects of the participants.
- The respondents that mentioned having experience with designing mobility programs, found funding/ co-funding, the organization of the working/learning program, project proposal writing and submission as the most challenging issues.
- Most respondents declared not being familiar with instruments for cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility and agreed that they would need support in implementing such instruments.

4.3 Focus group discussions

Composition of the focus group

Focus group meetings provided qualitative feedback on identifying the pedagogical and technical skills gaps at regional and national levels. In Albania, two focus groups met separately in their respective cities and connected via zoom to make the discussions more fruitful. One physical roundtable took place in B&H and one online in Kosovo. All discussions were moderated by specialists in the tourism and sustainability sector.

The below table provides more information about the composition of the groups.

COUNTRY	NUMBER	AGE GROUP	GENDER	TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED
ALBANIA		25-34 , 30 per cent of the participants 35-49, 40 per cent of the participants 50-65 ,30 per cent of the participants	30 per cent men and 70 per cent women	Education Institutions , principals and teachers ,the representative from the State Employment Agency and participants from third parties , such as business managers .
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	10	25-34, 30 % participants 35-49, 40 % participants 50-64, 10 % participants 65-74, 20 % participants	30 % men 70 % women	Education institutions (principal and three VET teachers from three schools that are already included in the national network); Business associations in the field of tourism (independent tourism entrepreneur, representatives of the National Park “Una”, the Tourist Board of the City of Bihać, and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage); Catering and hotel industry (representatives of hotel “Kostelski buk” and hotel “Paviljon/Safir”)
KOSOVO	7	50-64 years old	100% Male	Education institutions from Peja region (VET School “Rifat Gjota”, VET school “Shaban Spahija” and VET school “Ali Hadri”); Education institutions from Suahereke region (VET School “Abdyl Rama” and VET School Skender Laurasi”); Non-profit organization/NGO on tourism Region of Prishtina Training Provider Organization (Chamber of Hospitality and Tourism in Kosovo).

Table 8 Composition of the focus group

Focus group results

- Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of tourism labour market

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>Most of the participants pointed out that to have sustainable tourism we should prepare our students well toward a sustainable tourism.</p> <p>It was added that even the government should work to help in achieving this goal starting from maintaining the roads, helping the private sector invest more in taking students to have their practice done at their sector, making their job more attractive to the labour market, but to make this happen the curricula should be updated according to the labour market's need.</p> <p>A diverse tourism aspect should be evolved such as the cultural and historical tourism which will raise the number of tourists.</p>
B&H	<p>In addition to the cultural and historical heritage, tourism is mostly built around natural resources. Therefore, education on environmental conservation should be introduced from pre-school through primary and secondary education. It is necessary to give more importance to environmental organizations through direct contact with the local population, promoting a clean environment. It is important to invest more effort with the aim of preserving the environment.</p> <p>The participants expressed the need for organizing workshops, round tables, visits to schools, but also visits from schools to other institutions, in order to yield interest in the field of tourism to the students.</p> <p>To enable a mutual flow of information about the needs of the employees in the field of tourism, as well as information for students about job opportunities, salaries and other openings offered in this sector.</p>
KOSOVO	<p>Tourism is an unexplored business opportunity in the country of Kosovo. There are many capacities that the region of Peja has to offer in terms of sustainability and tourism. In the highway between Komoran to Prizren there is no business activity undertaken so far. Hence, villagers of nearby villages can sell their produce at certain assigned marketplaces after municipalities issue permits to offer such services. Even one marketplace having access on highways could enable farmers to sell their agricultural produces.</p>

Table 9 FG results: Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

- EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>VET staff are continuously trained through different EU programmes such as professional training, teaching methodology and teaching platforms, but there should be exchanges between European countries to get the best experience and to be able to incorporate it in our country through the development of the curricula which should be more practical and supported by the latest technology.</p>
B&H	<p>The participants are aware of the existence of EU programs and tools in the field of vocational education, but they do not apply to them sufficiently. The main reason is doing business through the treasury and the availability of funds after their approval. In addition, it was concluded that the stakeholders in this sector do not have sufficient knowledge to write the applications themselves, and that the workshops that are organized for training in writing project applications are quite theoretical and less</p>

	<p>practical. Therefore, the participants do not acquire sufficient skills for the preparation of project proposals and application to EU programs and funds.</p> <p>Institutions that successfully apply and are awarded the fund face other problems: lengthy procedures for implementation through complicated public procurement procedures and works in stages, all of which lead to slow implementation of activities and slow mapping of the tourist offer.</p>
KOSOVO	<p>The majority of the teaching staff in Prizren region has economic background and some of them have tourism background as an additional supplementary training is required on tourism. Programs designed for teaching staff specifically addressing tourism and sustainability are highly desirable.</p> <p>The labour force demand in the country is high and students of VET schools after their graduation are easily accommodating to the labour market. Based on the above, it was emphasised that opening of the career centres at primary schools can have a positive effect on having students defining their profiles at early stages.</p>

Table 10 FG results: EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

- VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

COUNTRY	SUMMARY
ALBANIA	<p>VET schools in Albania are continuously working hand in hand with the business sector to secure a place for the student to get trained depending on the profile of the school. Most of the time it has yielded positive results because after finishing the training the student has been offered a place for work, but low wages make them not accept the job.</p> <p>Teachers and students have done lots of training, but curricula should adapt to the region and business' needs.</p> <p>VET schools cooperate with the Employment Agency, where students finishing the last year of Vocational School, get registered for a job. It was stated that businesses are interested to employ the students but sometimes students do not accept because they want to work abroad or their parents interfere in their decision making.</p>
B&H	<p>The local Ministry of Education adopted the Regulation on the performance of internships, which aims at the education and professional development of students studying for all practical occupations, including in the field of tourism. The shortcoming of this Regulation is that it allows only 20 working days of professional practice per student. However, this can also be seen as a big shift compared to the previous period when there was no such possibility at all. By doing an internship, students acquire practical knowledge and skills and make contact with possible future employers.</p> <p>Due to insufficient financial support from the funder and the Ministry, VET schools mostly individually find opportunities for additional education of teaching staff in order to meet the needs prescribed by VET education. However, it was concluded that a higher number of professional development opportunities for teaching staff is needed.</p> <p>VET schools sign independently memoranda of understanding for students' professional practice and internship. Each school year there is an increasing number of these memoranda, as well as contracts for the sponsorship of school offices for teaching practice.</p> <p>Certain municipalities/cities have provided certain funds in their annual budget to support the realization of professional practice/internship of students in VET education.</p>
KOSOVO	<p>CISCO Academy financed by USAID will commence its activity starting from January 2023 at VET School "Ali Hadri" and "Shaban Spahija". The aim of this project is training</p>

of staff that teach IT and electronics, and the knowledge gained could be related to initiating a project for promotion of tourism in a VET school level. The school in Shiroke is planning to initiate new programs in tourism since they already have in place a program on hospitality. They made a field visit in Japan and have visited their rural zones that indicated an extraordinary learning experience to them. They plan to create infrastructure and to invest in rural tourism in cooperation with municipal and central level governments of the country, so that they could stimulate inhabitants of that region to produce local organic products and to introduce them to visitors as domestic products. This could be a big step forward in developing sustainable tourism in this zone. Infrastructure improvement of rural zones and workforce preparedness and skilled students that could guide the touristic groups and provide sustained information to the visitors will be the aim of such a program.

Table 11 FG results: VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Focus group summary

ALBANIA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The hotel and hospitality sector in Albania is an important sector in the country's economic contribution, which is seeing growth and development every year, being accompanied at the same time by an increase in requests for improvement. 2. There is a lack of qualified, well-trained workforce that shows interest in professional self-development. 3. Vocational schools in recent years have taken a better orientation to improve the quality of the curriculum in these study programs as a result of supporting European Programs through the implementation of projects or even the application of the dual system in Albania. 4. Schools identify the need for an improvement of the qualifications/training of their staff/teachers. 5. The triangle of school - public employment institution - private business was identified, but it is necessary to increase the digitization of internal employment processes and services. Most of the employment of young people is realized through private initiative or direct contact with business on the part of the student. 6. Albania has an increase in investments in this sector. Higher cooperation between schools and the private sector is required, which includes increasing the number of partnerships as well as the part of professional practice by students.
B&H	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In many parts, tourism is still a seasonal activity, therefore it is necessary to initiate activities and develop strategies in order to develop the touristic offer throughout the year (e.g. congress tourism, spa tourism). 2. The lack of qualified workers in the tourism industry is also an obvious problem. 3. There is also a shortage of timely information about supply and demand in the market. Students also lack information about employment possibilities after graduation. It is necessary to ensure a partnership approach and enable adequate and timely circulation of information among all participants in this process. 4. It was concluded that education is influenced by other factors as well (insufficient finances, inadequate teaching staff) which are crucial in the final outcome and competencies of the staff. 5. It is necessary for sustainable tourism, among other things, to develop and educate students' entrepreneurial skills, especially for professions that require four years of education. 6. It is necessary to ensure communication both vertically and horizontally. It is essential to provide support to each other and adopt positive practices as well.

	7. It was concluded that, since tourism is booming, promoting enrollment for tourist occupations is very important.
KOSOVO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need to institutionally explore new paths for sustainable tourism by creating travel opportunities with minimal impact and positive benefits for destinations and their communities. Simultaneously using ecotourism to educate tourists about nature and the environment, and travellers taking part in conservation and cultural activities. 2. On the other hand, following previous exchange experiences and feedback that VET schools and institutions received from students, they indicated that mobility improved students' communication skills. 3. Another possibility is involvement of students in paid internships by national businesses. 4. VET providers are making efforts in enrolling students with greater school performance at their schools because for time being students that join such schools have moderate performance at their primary school. Mechanism to target good performing students and to enrol them at VET schools is of vital importance.

Table 12 FG results: Final considerations

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The primary and secondary research that was conducted by partner-countries of the CO-HOST project, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, resulted in a spherical view of the VET system in those countries, in regard to both each national systematic approach, and to its need for change towards modernization and sustainability.

The Need Analysis framework has tried to coherently organise a set of information, the synthesis of which was reported first in the national reports (to which reference is made for further information) and then in this final report.

The main outcomes of all the needs analysis are:

- It is necessary to invest greater efforts in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and to establish a strong partnership with local tourism companies with a greater focus on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness.
- There is a need to create synergies with local or regional communities and private companies, to ensure that educational opportunities (incl. paid internships) are offered widely in the country. While funded donors are beneficial, they cannot bring a long-term effect in the absence of a coordinated and well-organized VET model at national level.
- There is a need for a highly skilled workforce. Establishment of advisory councils and better enrolment policy are suggested to better align curriculum with the labor market. Mechanism to target good performing students and to enrol them at VET schools is, also, of vital importance.
- There is a need to support the private sector by restructuring existing programmes, aiming at fast, efficient and short-term training solutions. The VET system appears to need additional funding to meet these needs.
- There is an urgent need for intensive on-the-job training of VET staff. It is necessary to ensure the procedures for the accreditation of teacher education programs, and the creation of a catalogue of professional development, since these elements have not yet fully entered into practice. It is also beneficial to promote greater involvement of both professional staff and students in mobility activities.
- Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, the use of quality assurance tools and developing VET internationalization strategies are among the most sought-after technical skills. Whereas integration of technology in teaching, up-to-date research skills, knowledge of instructional design and self-assessment/evaluation are the most sought-after pedagogical ones. Communication, critical thinking, and teamwork are identified as key soft skills.
- It also became apparent that potential users do not have sufficient knowledge to write project proposals and have difficulties in finding partners and funding or designing mobility programs in the European context.
- There is a need to fully implement a qualification framework and match existing qualifications to learning outcomes and to standards to align it to the European qualification framework. VETs are in need of support for cognition and validation of competences acquired in mobility programs.

Some final recommendations, resulting from the research conducted through the needs analysis in all partner countries, lead us to the conclusion that it would be necessary:

1. To invest in programs and initiatives designed for teaching staff specifically addressing tourism and sustainability.

2. To restructure VET systems to allow for fast, efficient and short-term training solutions of VET students.
3. To establish memoranda of collaboration between local or regional communities, educational centres and private companies to a) share information and b) align curriculum with the labor market.
4. To enhance international mobility the VET schools and institutions in the regions, putting aside the EU- and the Schengen limitations.
5. To organise continuous on-the-job trainings of VET staff focusing on critical technical, pedagogical and soft skills including mentoring on EU programmes and tools (especially with regard to mobilities and recognition of learning outcomes). Those skills include:

Technical skills

- a. Adaptability to new technologies and software applications,
- b. The use of quality assurance tools
- c. Developing VET internationalization strategies

Pedagogical skills

- d. Integration of technology in teaching, up-to-date research skills,
- e. Knowledge of instructional design
- f. Self-assessment/evaluation

Soft skills

- g. Communication
- h. Critical thinking
- i. Teamwork

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Annex 1: Online questionnaire

A. General instructions

This survey is launched as a consultation activity of the project “Creating Opportunities for VET mobility in HOspitality and Tourism (CO-HOST)”, a three-year project co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ Programme, KA2: Capacity building in the field of Vocational Education and Training. The project aims to support the realization of mobility projects between EU member states and WB countries, aimed at the enhancement of skills and competences of VET learners, in order to improve and modernize the VET system in enlargement countries. The answers to this survey will help us determine training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and the opportunities of tourism for the development of the Western Balkan region and provide recommendations for action. To fulfil the survey typically requires approximately 10 minutes. Responses will be treated anonymously, and the results will be used for research purposes only.

*Questions with * are mandatory.*

B. Personal Data

Please indicate the sector in which you work*

- Education
- Trade unions
- Business associations/providers in the field of tourism
- Catering and hospitality
- Other, please specify:

Which of the following describes best your current job/role?*

- Adult Trainer
- Vocational Education and Training Provider
- Travel agency manager
- Destination manager
- Tour organizer
- Travel consultant
- Tour operator
- Entrepreneur
- Corporate Social Responsibility Manager
- Office Administrator/Support
- Accommodation/Hospitality Manager
- Professional in the Accommodation/Hospitality Industry
- Professional in the Creative and Entertainment Activities
- Professional in the Transportation Industry
- Professional in the Food & Beverage Industry (serving tourism)
- Professional in the Business Support Services (accountant, marketer, business consultant etc.)
- Other, please specify:

Age group*

- 18-24

- 25-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65-74
- 75+

Gender*

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

C. Skills enhancement of VET staff in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality.

Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of labour market

- Are you familiar with sustainable tourism?* Yes - No
- Which of the following actions/measures should be implemented to make tourism in your sector more attractive?* (please choose up to 3 answers)
 - Provide innovative digital solutions
 - Safeguard cultural and natural heritage
 - Diversify the range of courses to cater various aspects of tourism
 - Establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses
 - Focus more on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness
 - Increase practical exposure
 - Invite industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and professionals to deliver guest lectures and workshops
 - Offer language courses
 - Offer cultural sensitivity training
 - Other:
- Which of the following actions/measures should be implemented to make vocational education in your sector more attractive?* (please choose up to 3 answers)
 - Continuous education of VET staff
 - Participation of VET staff to mobility activities
 - Participation of VET learners in mobility activities
 - Recognition of VET learners' competences
 - Promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women
- Please select the most relevant technical skills in your sector.* (please choose up to 3 answers)
 - Developing VET internationalization strategies (i.e Work Based learning, mobilities)
 - Using quality assurance instruments (i.e for the recognition of mobilities)
 - Budgeting, cost control, and financial analysis
 - Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, such as online travel platforms, property management systems, and customer relationship management (CRM) tools.
- Please select the most relevant pedagogical skills in your sector.* (please choose up to 3 answers)
 - Instructional design
 - Integration of technology in teaching
 - self-assessment/evaluation as a reflective process

- *Research skills*
- *Other*
- Please select the most relevant soft skills in your sector.* (please choose up to 3 answers)
 - *Communication skills*
 - *Interpersonal skills*
 - *Adaptability*
 - *Time management*
 - *Problem-solving*
 - *Critical thinking*
 - *Cultural sensitivity*
 - *Teamwork*
 - *Leadership skills*
 - *Customer service skills*
 - *Other*

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

- How beneficial do you find the knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education?* 1 (Very useful) – 2 (Useful) – 3 (Neutral) – 4 (Not useful)
- Do you have experience with international mobility of staff?* Yes – No
- If yes, please point out the type of mobility you had experience with:
 - *Job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers*
 - *Teaching or training assignments (2 to 365 days) for teachers*
 - *Courses and training (2 to 30 days, maximum 10 days of course fees per participant) for teachers*
 - *Other*
- Have you designed, managed and coordinated mobility arrangements and projects for learners?* Yes – No
- Which of the following aspects do you find most challenging when organizing and conducting international VET mobility?*
 - *Project proposal writing and submission*
 - *Finding partners for proposals*
 - *Logistics*
 - *Project reporting*
 - *Practical issues related to the organization of the working/learning program*
 - *Funding/ co-funding*
 - *Interpersonal relations*
 - *Cultural differences*
 - *N/A*
- Which of the following do you consider as benefits from international VET mobilities for a VET provider?*
 - *Boosted attractiveness of the organisation/institution*
 - *Improved organisational image*
 - *Enriched organisational know-how*
 - *Enriched partner network*
 - *Boosted prospects for international cooperation*
 - *Boosted quality of the educational services provided*
 - *Access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches*
 - *N/A*
- Which of the following do you consider as benefits for participants/learners in international VET mobilities?*

- *Improved career prospects*
- *Boosted skills, knowledge and competences relevant to their current/future occupation*
- *Access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches*
- *Improved transversal skills*
- *Boosted foreign language competences*
- *Improved multicultural awareness and tolerance*
- *Widened personal and professional horizons*
- Are you aware of EU instruments for the recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility (i.e. ECVET process)?* Yes – No
- If applicable, do you need support in defining and implementing them?* Yes – No – N/A
- If the answer is yes, *Please provide a short answer.*
- Would you be interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes?* Yes – No
- If yes, please specify why:
 - *It is free of charge*
 - *I have spare time*
 - *I want to improve my existing knowledge*
 - *I want to learn something new*
 - *Other:*

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

- Are you aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in your country?* Yes - No
- If yes, please provide a short description of the initiative.

D. Final communications

Thanks for your collaboration! If you wish to be kept informed of the progress of the project, please provide us with the data below, which will be treated in compliance with current privacy regulations.

Name

Surname

Organization

Email

Annex 2: Focus group consent form

Introductory note

The overall objective of the CO-HOST project is to support the realization of mobility projects between EU member states and WB countries, aimed at the enhancement of skills and competences of VET learners, in order to improve and modernize the VET system in enlargement countries. The project focuses on the topic of Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality, with a strong emphasis on green and entrepreneurial skills. Precisely in countries that are experiencing rapid growth and social change, development must be understood as sustainable development, in line with the 2030 objectives of the Global Agenda. CO-HOST encourages forms of tourism that respect the environment, local cultures that contribute to the sustainable development of the territories: it will be particularly interesting and strategic, for VET students and staff, to experience during their internship periods in the EU, the most advanced practices in this field, which are ensured by experienced partners. The project's specific aims are:

- To share best practices among VET providers coming from EU and enlargement countries, encouraging the involvement of VET providers in EU cooperation and mobility projects;
- To improve technical and pedagogical skills of VET staff from enlargement countries;
- To improve technical, transversal and soft skills of VET students from enlargement countries, in order to improve their occupational prospects;
- To establish Solid National Networks in the WB Countries.

In this context, the CO-HOST project is conducting research in 3 Western Balkan countries to identify the training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and the opportunities of tourism for the development of the region. This roundtable discussion is part of the research activities that will help us determine training needs in the area and provide recommendations for action.

More information on the CO-HOST project can be found here: <https://www.cohostproject.eu/>

Consent form

1. ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BURDENS REGARDING MY PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH?

Your participation in the research does not imply any risk or financial burden on you. However, we inform you that in the event of illegal acts or criminal activity your personal data is not protected from any investigation by the official authorities, and that we may have to take the necessary legal action in order to inform the authorities, especially if there is a risk to physical health or human life.

2. AM I OBLIGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH?

Your participation in the research is **completely voluntary**. You can refuse to participate without justification. You can change your mind at any time and leave the research without justification, and without consequences. In this case you can request the deletion of the collected data and information.

3. WILL I RECEIVE REMUNERATION?

Participants will not receive remuneration for their participation in the survey.

4. HOW WILL MY PERSONAL DATA BE PROTECTED?

We will collect the following personal data: gender, age, country of origin etc

Your data will be used exclusively for research, scientific, and statistical purposes.

Your data will be processed based on your **explicit consent**, which you provide to us through this form.

Your data will be anonymized by removing information in a transcript or notes from a human encounter that may reveal the identity of the interviewee (such as real names and location).

In no way will your identity be revealed in publications, public presentations or scientific reports.

In case we want to use your data by name, we will ask you in advance for your explicit consent.

In case of a group interview/ focus group, we encourage you to commit not to disclose information or details of other participants that came to your knowledge as part of the research.

The Project keeps records of the research data for five (5) years from the completion of the research, following all the required organizational and technical security measures. The data will then be securely deleted/erased. If we consider that the research data is necessary to be used for other research or to be kept for archiving, scientific or historical research or statistical purposes, we will proceed to their complete anonymization.

Your rights regarding the protection of your personal data and their processing for the purpose of the present research are the following:

Access	You can receive copies of your data being processed in the research context.
Correction	You can request corrections to your data being processed in the research context.
Portability	You can request that your data which are being processed in the research context be transmitted to another controller .
Automated individual decision making	You can object to automated individual decision making including profiling.

You also have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. If this happens, you also have the following rights:

Deletion	You can request that we delete your data being processed in the research context.
Restriction of processing	You can request a restriction of the processing of your data that have been processed in the research context.

Information	For more information you can contact: <i>Name and Family Name, Role, Organisation and Email</i>
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DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, declare that I have been fully informed of the terms of my participation in the research and the processing of my personal data.

I fully consent to participate in the research and to the processing of the above-mentioned personal data.

I have been informed that I can revoke my consent at any time.

Place:

Name of participant

Full name:

Date:

Signature:

Annex 3: Focus group questionnaire

Some questions involve knowledge on the topic, so the moderator has to introduce an explanation. In some questions reasons for a positive or negative response should be explored

Sustainable tourism and attractiveness tourism labour market

- Are you familiar with sustainable tourism?¹
- What action should be considered a priority in order to make tourism in your regions/country more attractive?
- What are the main challenges or gaps you have observed in the training and education provided by the VET sector in relation to the labour market demands of the tourism industry?
- What specific training programs or initiatives do you believe would be most effective in promoting regional development through the growth of the tourism industry?
- Are there any emerging trends or developments in the tourism sector that you believe require additional training or educational programs in the VET sector?
- In your opinion, what are the key skills and competencies that should be prioritized in VET programs to meet the demands of the tourism sector and promote regional development?
- How can the collaboration between the VET sector and local tourism businesses be improved in order to ensure students receive the necessary skills and knowledge for employment?
- Which pedagogical skills² should be implemented to improve the skills and competences of VET staff?
- Which technical skills³ should be implemented to improve the skills and competences of VET staff?
- Which soft skills⁴ should be implemented to improve the skills and competences of VET staff?

¹ The following definition can be provided: Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yz4d73z8>

² Please mention the below:

- Instructional design
- Integration of technology in teaching
- Self-assessment/evaluation
- Research skills
- Other

³ Please mention the below:

- Developing VET internationalization strategies (i.e Work Based learning, mobilities)
- Using quality assurance instruments (i.e for the recognition of mobilities)
- Budgeting, cost control, and financial analysis
- Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, such as online travel platforms, property management systems, and customer relationship management (CRM) tools.
- Other

⁴ Please mention the below:

- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Adaptability
- Time management
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Cultural sensitivity
- Teamwork
- Leadership skills
- Customer service skills
- Other

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

- Have you designed, managed and coordinated mobility arrangements and projects for learners? If yes, what do you consider as the main benefit and the main challenge for VET providers?
- What do you think is the main benefit for participants/learners in international VET mobilities?
- Are you aware of EU instruments for the recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility (i.e. ECVET process) and, if yes, do you need support in defining and implementing them?
- Do you believe that this type of training project⁵ can bring benefits to the tourism, marketing and hospitality system of your country?

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

- Are you aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing strategies in your country?
- Have you personally participated in or collaborated with any VET initiatives or programs that promote sustainable tourism practices and marketing strategies? If so, please share your experience and provide any relevant information about those initiatives.

Final considerations

- Do you have final thoughts to share?

⁵ Please briefly present the CO-HOST project

Annex 4: National report guidelines

General instructions

The report should use the official project deliverable template.

It should not exceed 4200 words (without annexes, tables and graphs).

Structure of the National Report

1. Executive summary

This summary should be prepared at the end, after the report has been completed, and it should provide an overall description of the purpose and objectives of the report, a brief overview of the data collection methods, and a brief presentation of the main findings.

Length: 200-300 words

2. Introduction

A general introduction outlining the general objectives of the report.

Length: 100-200 words

3. Methodology

A short summary of the methodological tools that were used based on the guidelines that have been provided in the Research protocol. Any differentiation should be explained.

Length: 100-200 words

4. Results

4.1 Literature review and desk research

This section should include:

- Some **technical information** regarding the desk research: type of source, territorial scale, type of document, etc.
- The **results** of the literature review and desk research. The results should be categorised in the following subsections:
 1. ***National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills***
 2. ***VET staff learning needs and constraints at national level***
 3. ***Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector at national level***
 4. ***Vet initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing***: selection of 2 to 4 VET initiatives paying attention to: describing the case study, analysing the main aspects that connect it to the topic of interest, and illustrating the conclusions.
Please use the below template.

Best Practice Title	
Short Description	
Location/place	
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	
Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	
Target groups	
Supporting Stakeholders	
Sources of funding	
Description of activities	
Conclusions	
Links and references	
Contact person	

References should be cited using the APA style citation method (documents will be listed at the end of the report in the "References" section).

For more information, please refer to pages 5-6 of the Research protocol.

Length: 700-800 words

4.2 Online survey

This section should include:

- Some **technical information** regarding the survey: sample composition, profile of the interviewees, tools used for the distribution of the questionnaires, number of questionnaires administered and completed.
- The **results** of the survey. The results should be categorised in the following sub-sections:
 1. **Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of tourism labour market** (national level)
 2. **EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education** (national level)
 3. **VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing** (national level)
 4. **Final considerations**

Length: 800-900 words and descriptive statistics

For more information, please refer to pages 6-7 of the Research protocol.

4.3 Focus group discussions

This section should include:

- Some **technical information** regarding the focus group: profile of the interviewees, considerations about the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the group, method of conducting the focus group (e.g. semi structured, with interview guide), etc.
- The **results** of the discussions. The results should be categorised in the following sub-sections:
 1. **Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of tourism labour market** (national level)
 2. **EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education** (national level)
 3. **VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing** (national level)
 4. **Final considerations**

Length: 800-900 words

For more information, please refer to pages 7-8 of the Research protocol.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

This section contains a general interpretation of the results.

Recommendations should also be included, actions that are suggested to address the issues at hand taking into account the aims envisaged by the project.

Length: 700-900 words

Annex 5: National report – Albania

The National report for Albania was created by two partners of the CO-HOST project that represent this country as University College of Business and “Fan Noli” school. This report includes and updated information on VET sector legal reforms and the main efforts undertaken for its development, the challenges in these years, the main actors of its part, as well as the identification of limitations, constraints, chances for improving the quality of this sector and the aim that the final result is competitive in the international market.

1. Executive summary

This National report aims to reveal specific needs for VET training in hospitality and tourism and not only at the national level of Albania.

A mixed research methodology was used for the national report on training needs, combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved data collection, with all research activities running in parallel. Phase 2 involved the analysis of data collected in Phase 1.

The main findings of the National report indicate that students need more experience to integrate in the labour market. The government should be more collaborative concerning the employment of young people.

The collected data indicate the need to invest in the development of various skills such as: the application of internalization of vocational education and training, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and the use of quality assurance instruments, integration of technology into teaching, research skills and teaching design, communication skills and teamwork or critical thinking.

It is necessary to organize more education in this area about EU funds and application and additional information about international mobility, as well as the possibility of improving the acquired knowledge.

2. Introduction

During these first months of starting to work on the CO-HOST project, we have confirmed our interest in participating in this project with a big focus on creating and increasing the opportunities for the VET sector especially in Hospitality and Tourism. UCB and Fan Noli School are offering study programs of scale 5 based on European Qualification Framework and the most important for us is: (i) to get a new European experience in this sector; (ii) to offer the opportunity to our students and teachers in improving their skills; (iii) to be part of a wide national and international network that will impact on our common sustainable cooperation and know-how technique exchange. Within the framework of the CO-HOST, we engaged in a deep research work aimed to detect specific VET training needs in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality at national level including Albania as well. The main objectives of the national report are the following:

- To assess the training needs
- To identify the learning needs and political blockages
- To organize the training activities and content.

More specific objectives are the following:

- To capture data in Albania regarding the training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and the opportunities of tourism for the development of the region
- To detect and map existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in Albania.

The research report summarizes collected information as well as specific learning needs and political constraints for the development of the VET system in the country. In addition, the training needs report will be the starting point for the development of the capacity-building and internationalization activities.

3. Methodology

Albania has applied almost the same methodology techniques as other partners according to the project framework, and project guidelines. To better define the training needs for the second step of the project, we have used a technique which combines quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis. To get these data we worked in a hybrid way (online and in person). The qualitative method of data collection consisted of primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection was conducted through focus groups discussions and other formal or informal interviews. Secondary data collection was conducted through literature review and desk research for additional information.

The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 included data collection where all research activities were running in parallel. Phase 2 included analysis of the data collected in phase 1. The results of the analysis are presented in the national report of Albania.

4. Results

The Literature review and desk research includes information from different online resources, official government sources, school textbooks, NGOs' official documents and data, professional and academic resources, institutional stakeholders' statistics, and technical reports.

The results are categorised in the following subsections:

4.1 Literature review and desk research

1. National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills

Albania is facing two skills challenges. First, there is the low level of skills of the working age population. The second challenge is related to the workforce's possession of the skills required in the labour market, the lack of which can prevent the creation of more or better quality jobs. Some of the key indicators of a potential skills mismatch can be considered: (i) high unemployment rate among young people and high unemployment rate of graduates from higher education; (ii) The high rate of young people who are neither in employment, nor in education or training (iii) The percentage of businesses that face difficulties in recruitment.

The system of education and professional training in the country received a boost and special attention with the design and implementation of the Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2022, within which the formation and qualification of the future workforce and its integration in accordance with the needs of a developing labour market received special emphasis in public policies. As a result, during the last years, important steps have been taken in consolidating the regulatory and institutional framework, in the further development and implementation of the Albanian Qualifications Framework, which was referenced with the European Qualifications Framework. Also, the main efforts of the responsible institutions were focused on the reorganization and optimization of the network of public VET providers, a process which is expected to have a significant impact on the expansion of the VET offer, in the context of lifelong learning.

The vision of Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2022 is inspired by the general goal of "Europe 2020" for achieving quick, sustainable and inclusive growth. The national employment and skills strategy aims, by 2022, to have a competing economy and an inclusive society that relies on:

"Higher skills and better jobs for all women and men"

The general goal of the strategy is to promote quality jobs and possibilities for skills for all Albanian women and men, throughout their life cycle. This goal will be achieved with coherent and coordinated policy actions, which both respond to the demand and supply for jobs, and contribute to removing gaps of social inclusion.

The National Employment and Skills Strategy focuses on four strategic priorities, as follows:

- fosters decent job opportunities through effective labour market policies.
- offer quality vocational education and training to youth and adults.
- promotes social inclusion and territorial cohesion.
- strengthens the governance of the labour market and qualification system.

The aim of the strategy The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 - 2022 and its action plan aim to integrate economic, educational, vocational and entrepreneurial policies by developing an action plan which aims to increase the employment rate, thus enabling a gradual transition from passive unemployment policies to active and promotional employment ones, and simultaneously focusing on the development of labour force in the country. The government program 2017 - 2021 has placed focus on employment and quality

development of the labour force, in accordance with the European Union vision and directives, the European Employment Strategy 2020, and the requirements for the European integration of Albania into the EU. The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2022 is based on the implementation of guidelines from the government program, the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI), and the mid-term review report of the National Employment and Skills Strategy implemented during 2014 - 2018. Strategy objective The main objective of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019 – 2022 and its action plan is to identify and design the right policies that promote employment in the country and vocational training of the labour force, with the purpose of creating quality jobs and lifelong opportunities for skills training. The action plan focuses on increasing opportunities for decent jobs through efficient labour market policies, offering quality vocational education and training opportunities for youth and adults, promoting social inclusion and cohesion, and strengthening the labour market and qualification system. Pursuant to the government vision, this strategy looks at the vocational qualification and employment as closely connected, aiming to closely tie vocational education and training services to the employment ones.

2. VET staff learning needs and constraints at national level.

The Western Balkans is one of the regions with the highest level of unemployment in Europe, especially in terms of recent graduates, and this is one of the most important reasons leading to the mass exodus of young people from the countries of the region. The vertical discrepancy between the educational level and the employment of graduates continues to be high in BP countries, namely around 47% for the year 2021. This is a consequence of the insufficient orientation of education to the needs of the labor market and is related with very poor practical training of students.

International experiences show that post-secondary education and training is a suitable and valuable educational alternative that contributes to providing better skills for young students without work experience, as well as for employers who want to improve their level of education to achieve a better position in the labor market. International experiences also show that the systems of post-secondary vocational programs should have appropriate regulation and be given due attention by public authorities in the field of education in order to become visible and popular. In Albania, Law No. 15/2017 on "Education and Vocational Training in the Republic of Albania" was approved, which aims to:

- to create a developed VET system that responds to socio-economic and technological changes, in the conclusion of such a real workplace system.
- to create sustainable insurance and guarantee of students in professional education, in the standards of the European Union.
- to modernize the VET system, making it a more and more effective mechanism for the creativity of the rhythms of the effectiveness of the economy of the Albanian society, ensuring its compatibility with the educational system and the labor market.
- to guarantee equal opportunities for all those who want to study at the VET.

However, regardless of the drafting and implementation of the law, the National Strategy as a supporting document of the legal framework, the establishment of the National Employment and Skills Agency, even though the number of post-secondary study programs and registered students continues to grow and the continuous support that this sector has had from various projects and collaborations from European partners and beyond, the Albanian practice has shortcomings in all three aspects:

- regulation is not perfect, attention from public authorities is insufficient and the relationship between educational institutions and employers is minimal.
- Education is not sufficiently oriented towards the needs of the labor market.
- curricula are too theoretical; students' practical training is weak and workplace learning is not well organized.

The conclusion is that the current post-secondary system needs to be improved in order to better respond to the needs of the labor market and students.

If we rely on the initiatives taken in recent years, we can find other data on the developments of this sector, such as the one from the head of the Regional Challenges Fund, who confirms that he has encountered a considerable number and sectoral diversity of interests to develop in this sector. This shows that the reforms undertaken in recent years in the vocational education and training (VET) system in Albania in coordination with donor support have improved the image and quality of the VET system, its accessibility and relevance in the labor market. These efforts, which have influenced the increase in productivity and competitiveness in the

region and beyond, are creating a stable base towards increasing the quality of skilled employees by cooperating closely with the Vocational Training Institutes (VTI).

Not only in this direction, the results have shown that great efforts have been made, but also in the direction of developing the skills of the pedagogical staff. The professional development of VET teachers and trainers has been identified by the European Training Foundation as a key driver for improving VET systems in all regions: firstly, because they are the most important contribution important in the VET system; secondly, teachers and trainers are critical to the successful implementation of other reforms, such as changes in organizations, curricula and development of work-based learning, technology and pedagogy.

We still agree on the fact that there is the need for ongoing professional development through continuous training programs of VET directors, teachers and support staff. To work on expanding the network with other European partners and to keep it active in sharing the experiences and knowledge .

3. Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector at national level

In the traditional VET system in Albania, the assessment of professional skills has been (and continues to be) the responsibility of individual VET providers and their teachers, under the supervision of the state governing body which also determines the assessment instruments. and testing. From the point of view of the system, the most hindering factors are identified as:

The evaluation standards determined by the National Agency of this sector are mainly based on the subjects defined in the framework curriculum rather than on learning outcomes. The European Qualifications Framework proposes a shift from the traditional input-based system paradigm towards outcome-based learning design (curriculum) and outcome-based assessment models.

Domain experts from industry are not involved in the design of test items. Test items may have different difficulties (memorization, functional understanding and problem solving), which affect the quality and results of the tests. The participation of field experts from the industry in the design of

Practical tests are essential .

There is no concept for the training of assessors and there is a lack of accreditation. Indeed, there is no accreditation procedure for VET providers to verify their capacity to function as an assessment centre. VET is considered a collaborative task between the government and the private sector. Cooperation can be made mandatory by law, but it would never be as efficient as it would be if it were based on mutual interest. Therefore , it is suggested to increase the voluntary contribution of companies and experts in the field to provide their input and expertise in determining performance parameters, to measure professional competencies, and in participating in the procedures of a real evaluation.

Albania as a candidate country for the EU, quality assurance in VET takes on a new dimension. Albania committed to develop a mechanism for quality assurance in VET that guarantees the provision of a skilled workforce, which increases the efficiency and competitiveness of the Albanian labor market, and for the integration of young people in society through increased employability and mobility. Quality assurance is a cross-sectoral task. The foreign donor community has supported Albanian actors with a series of pilot projects to test models and approaches of a quality assurance system for VET in Albania. Despite all the progress achieved, the reality of VET still does not reflect the ambitious scenarios defined in the legal framework. The dialogue between policy makers and the implementation level is still fragmented and disconnected. The involvement of the private sector is still limited to pilot projects initiated by donors or is based on the efforts of individual schools and is not yet systemic.

Major deficiencies in quality assurance of the Albanian VET system:

Lack of a coherent national model for quality assurance, including monitoring and guidance mechanisms, to ensure that training delivery at the implementation level follows national standards.

The role of the private sector in quality assurance is very limited and not clearly defined.

There are no national standards (training regulations) that define the minimum quality criteria for professional practice and internship programs.

The current system for continuous development of management and teaching staff must be coordinated with the new expectations of schools to become innovative engines in the reform process, with greater autonomy to respond more directly and quickly to the demands of the local /regional labor market.

4. Vet initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing:

In the last ten years in Albania, several fundamental initiatives have been undertaken in the VET sector, significantly improving its role and importance in determining the professional future of a good part of young people; in improving the technical conditions of professional schools that offer these study programs and increasing the quality of educational curricula; as well as increasing the awareness of the private sector to support this target group of young people during their studies. The projects implemented in these years, from foreign partner countries with long experiences in the VET sector and with a wide youth employment market, have been supported by public decision-making institutions in Albania, being encouraged towards increasing the quality of the VET sector in Albania.

Best Practice Title	'Skills for Jobs' (S4J)
Short Description	The Kick Off event of Skills for Jobs Project (S4J) was held in 2016 as the first phase of it. Under the motto "New Ways for You" referring to the innovative learning methods that Swisscontact will support VET Albanian sector. This project had to start with changing the mindset that vocational education was a last option for youngsters and in parallel work with all partners to improve the quality and relevance of the VET offer. During the second phase (May 2019 – June 2023), the project focused more on transferring good practices to more VET providers; empowering institutions and creating a culture to drive change as a constant part of their work and bringing private sector companies to the heart of the institution and get them actively engaged on school board, in the processes of curricula update and offer diversification and establishing a norm in providing apprenticeships for school students. In Phase 3 (July 2023 – June 2027) the project aims to amplify past achievements, ensuring sustainable VET changes and fostering a brighter future for Albania, while also offering improved opportunities to approximately 29,400 Albanian individuals, encompassing women, men, youth, and special needs groups
Location/place	Albania
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	A project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	government and non-governmental organizations
Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	July 2023 – June 2027 (phase 3)
Target groups	3 Educational directions with 8 profiles; 36 teachers made around 650 - 700 students per academic year; 102 partner businesses; 7 blended learning classrooms. Profiles: Tourism and Hospitality;

	Economy and Business; Textile – Garment.
Supporting Stakeholders (business partners)	Local companies; resorts and hotels, restaurants and traditional ones; public institutions and agencies; travel agencies; Industry Associations; Public and Private Universities; high schools.
Sources of funding (donators)	Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF) Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Delegation of the European Union to Albania
Description of activities	The project is in phase 3, the consolidation and transfer phase and the primary focus during this phase will concentrate on the development, consolidation, and transfer of six key innovation objects: Digitalization of VET Offer Improvement of internal Processes and Structures Continuous Professional Development Models Business relations and networks Quality of work-based learning in companies Diversification of offer and upskilling
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relations with Businesses and Other Partners. S4J project has support partners in: (i) Expanding and consolidating their network of businesses and other partners, including non-partner schools; (ii) Establishing and consolidating collaboration with organized business bodies (chambers of commerce, business associations, etc.); (iii) Having structured dialogues between VET institutions and the private sector companies; (iv) Capacity building of the Business Relations Coordinator at the Development Unit of the VET providers, who is responsible for identifying potential partners that add value to the school. • Diversification of the VET Offer. S4J supports partner institutions for the implementation and well-functioning of graduates' tracing process as well as for capacity building of the Tracer Coordinator in the Development Unit. All our partner institutions have already set up a tracer system at provider level for their graduates. • New Ways of Learning. New learning methods involve the use of technology and the combination of face-to-face learning with online learning (blended learning). These methods put the student at the center of the process, increasing their commitment, satisfaction and accountability for the learning process. To support and promote online learning in vocational schools, S4J developed the MesoVET platform. It serves as an all-

	<p>inclusive solution and enables the documentation of activities for both classroom-based and distance learning of the students and apprentices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-based Learning • Institutional Development
Links and references	https://skillsforjobs.al/
Contact person	info@skillsforjobs.al
Best Practice Title	'AL-VET – Quality for All' High-quality and socially inclusive vocational education and training in Albania
Short Description	<p>In its national strategy for training and employment (2019-2022) Albania has set itself the goal of strengthening employment, especially for disadvantaged groups, by increasing the labour market relevance and quality of its vocational training. In Albania, too, educational disadvantage leads to fewer opportunities on the labour market. The economic growth sectors of tourism and hospitality and IT are of particular importance for strengthening employment in Albania.</p> <p>Key Focuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational education and training (all 34 schools of vocational education in Albania and 10 vocational training centres, with a focus on tourism and IT education) • School quality development and gender mainstreaming • Digitisation at schools
Location/place	Albania
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	<p>OeAD</p> <p>In close cooperation with the Albanian Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications, the National Agency for Employment and Skills and other Albanian educational institutions the Regional Office Tirana implements projects in the focus areas of vocational education and training, school quality development and digitization.</p>
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	government and non-governmental organizations

Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	2021-2024
Target groups	<p>6 – 21 schools of vocational education and training for tourism and hospitality and IT: teachers, headmasters and headmistresses, business liaison officers, quality development officers, gender officers; 4 boarding schools for pupils: boarding school management, educators, other staff. Approximately 60 companies in the tourism/hospitality and IT sectors: entrepreneurs, mentors</p> <p>Indirect target group: Approximately 7,700 young people during the project period</p>
Supporting Stakeholders (business partners)	Local companies of Hospitality - Tourism and IT sectors; travel agencies; Industry Association; high schools.
Sources of funding (donators)	Co-financed and implemented by the OeAD
Description of activities	<p>Objective: By increasing the quality of and access to vocational training in the tourism and hospitality and IT sectors the project “AL-VET – Quality for ALL” contributes to increasing the employability of disadvantaged groups of people in Albania. A special focus is on access to vocational qualifications for girls and women. This is done in two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Increasing the quality of vocational training offers for tourism/hospitality and IT; (ii) Increasing access to vocational training for disadvantaged groups, especially girls from rural areas, and strengthening girls' access to a typical training
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 300 teachers have been trained in the organisation of practice- and skills-oriented practical lessons • New job profiles relevant to the labour market, descriptions of qualifications and curricula for chefs and tourism/hospitality assistants and elective modules in “Technical English” are available in a piloted form • Approximately 25 teaching/learning materials are available online to all schools of vocational education and training • Approximately 60 companies have been trained in the organisation of high-quality internships • A cooperation network of business liaison officers of at all schools of vocational education and training in Albania contributes to the continuous expansion of business contacts • A training course for school quality coordinators is available in a piloted form • The school QA coordinators and headmasters and headmistresses of all schools of vocational education

	<p>and training in Albania have been trained in the exercise of their role and the implementation of effective school quality development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management and staff of four boarding schools have acquired the skills to implement an inclusive boarding school culture and the corresponding quality development measures • Three administrative authorities have introduced quality assurance mechanisms at 4 boarding schools as examples of good practice • Four boarding schools and pilot schools have been equipped with appropriate infrastructure • Tools for effective career guidance and career counselling and skills enabling their application in vocational education and training have been developed
Links and references	https://oead.at/en/cooperations/educational-cooperation-with-eastern-and-south-eastern-europe/educational-cooperation-partner-countries/albania
Contact person	https://www.facebook.com/oead.tirana

Other:

<https://efvet.org/vet-to-vet-capacity-building-in-albania-2/>

<https://teavet.org/>

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[Review of Albania's VET system | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

https://csl.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CAPEX-VET-Albania_SDC.pdf

<https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/work-based-learning-centres-vocational-excellence>

4.2 Online survey



Sample description

The survey was taken online and 65 responses were collected.

94% of them work in education and for the other 6%, the occupation was not specified.

None of the participants was part of trade business union or catering.

56% of the responders work in the VET sector and the rest of them work as adult trainers or other occupations .

Age:

42%, 50-64

40%, 35-49

15%, 25-34

3%, 18-24

Gender:

77% females

23% males

All participants were citizens of Albania.

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

80% of participants were aware of sustainable tourism whereas 20% of them did not have any idea of it.

22% think that to make tourism sustainable Safeguard cultural and natural heritage should be implemented.

23% believe that establishing strong partnerships with local tourism businesses will make the tourism more sustainable

14% think to provide innovative digital solutions
11% to focus more on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness. 7% in trying to diversify the range of courses to cater various aspects of tourism

24% of participants believe that participation of VET learners in mobility activities will make vocational education more attractive.

26% think that continuous education of VET staff will be an added value to make the VET sector more attractive.

23% want the Participation of VET staff in exchanges and mobilities.

22% urge promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women.

32% of the participants were adapted to the new technologies and software applications, 30% can develop VET internationalization strategies and 22% can use quality assurance instruments.

The pedagogical skills are as follows: 36% are integrated in technology in teaching.

27% have research skills.

27% have the self-assessment/evaluations as a reflective process .

28% believe that Communication skills are the most important soft skills in our sector.

12% think in Critical Thinking way,

11% in Teamwork method and

10% in Problem-Solving .

78% of the responders believe that the knowledge of EU programmes and tools are very useful , whereas 12 % of them think that its knowledge is useful.

The majority of the participants do not have experience with international mobility and staff.

Just 18% of them do have this kind of experience mostly in training and job shadowing.

69% of the participants have not designed , managed or coordinated mobility. Only 31% of them have done one of the things mentioned above.

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

While conducting an international mobility the most challenging aspects are as follows:

Project proposal writing and submission
Finding partners for proposals
Funding/ co-funding
Practical issues related to the organization of the working/learning program

The benefits from the international VET mobilities are :

Boosted quality of the educational services provided
Boosted attractiveness of the organisation/institution.
Access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches.

Boosted prospects for international cooperation.

The following are considered to be as benefits for participants in VET mobility:

Boosted skills, knowledge and competencies relevant to their current/future occupation.
Widened personal and professional horizons.
Improved career prospects.
Access to innovative/new/ practical teaching approaches.
Boosted foreign language competences.

78% are not aware of EU instruments for the recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility (i.e. ECVET). Just a minority of 22% is aware of it.

55% of them agreed on being supported in implementing them by taking training , by having financial support , whereas 45% of them were not interested.

77% would be interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes, for the purpose of improving their knowledge and learning something new.
12% of them were not interested at all.

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

88% are not aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in our country, Albania. Just a minority of the responders were aware of it .

Most respondents are familiar with sustainable tourism. To make tourism more attractive, it is

Final consideration

necessary to invest greater efforts in Safeguard of cultural and natural heritage and to establish strong partnership with local tourism businesses with more focus on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness.

It is necessary to carry out continuous education of VET staff, as well as greater involvement of both VET staff and VET learners in mobility activities.

Respondents are of the opinion that it is necessary to invest more in developing skills such as: developing VET internalization strategies, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and usage of quality assurance instruments, integration of technology in teaching, research skills and instructional design, communication skills, and teamwork or critical thinking.

We can conclude that the respondents, even though aware of the benefits that arise from mobility, do not have enough knowledge to write project applications, and find it difficult to find partners for cooperation.

The largest number of respondents is not aware of the EU instruments for recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility, but they did not express any significant interest in finding out.

There is a general opinion that it is necessary to organize more education in this area and additional information about international mobility, as well as the possibility to improve the acquired knowledge.

Almost all respondents are not aware of any existing VET initiatives in this sector.

4.3 Focus group discussions

Sample and method description

Focus group meeting provided qualitative feedback on identifying the pedagogical and technical skills gaps at regional and national levels.

In the Albanian focus group meeting not only the project team members but also third partners invited by UCB and Fan Noli School that play an important role in the VET sector.

We had the pleasure to have at our round tables representatives from: (i) VET sector private businesses in Hospitality and Tourism, (ii) trade union, (iii)

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

Focus group results

1. Sustainable tourism and attractiveness of labour market (national level)

As a start, it clarified the meaning of sustainable tourism among all participants, which means a long-life tourism involving qualitative service.

Most of the participants pointed out that to have sustainable tourism we should prepare our students well toward sustainable tourism.

It was added that even the government should work to help in achieving this goal starting from maintaining the roads, helping the private sector invest more in taking students to have their practice done at their sector, making their job more attractive to the

directors and teachers of some professional schools, (iv) representatives of the state employment agency. Our aim was to have in this open discussion at least one representative of each main actor in VET sector, from the teacher, director, public institutions representatives and business managers as a as the end point of this important chain that determines the future of the VET sector

Both focus groups met separately in the respective cities and connected via zoom to make the discussions more fruitful.

To organize this meeting in a hybrid way, was a very good solution for both partners that are based in two different cities of Albania. We had the opportunity to get introduced with our project teams, our invited partners, stakeholders and interested parties to be part of it. We had the possibility to have a large and diverse focus group, so to hear more new ideas, experiences from them.

The moderator of the meeting was Irsida Dinoshi as she is more experienced in managing the projects and really did a proper orientation of discussion to achieve the objective of the meeting.

She used the questionnaire which was sent beforehand to the participants, as a guideline for a smooth discussion flow. We had the possibility to apply a semi-structured technique because having online and in presence a large group of participants we had to listen carefully to their opinion, and the gentle conversation between two or more people who were supporting each other on discussing a main topic.

The discussion was held in a way that all opinions were heard and respected.

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Final consideration

labour market, but to make this happen the curricula should be updated according to the labour market's need.

A diverse tourism aspect should be evolved such as cultural and historical tourism which will raise the number of tourists.

2. EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education (national level)

VET staff are continuously trained through different EU programmes such as professional training, teaching methodology and teaching platforms, but there should be exchanges in European countries to get the best experience and to be able to adapt it in our country through the development of the curricula which should be more practical and supported by the latest technology.

3. VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

VET schools in our country are continuously working hand in hand with the business to secure a place for the student to get trained regarding the profile of the school. Most of the time it has resulted positively because after finishing the training the student has been offered a place for work, but low wages make them not accept the job.

Teachers and students have done lots of training, but curricula should be merged at school level in regards to the region and business' needs.

VET schools cooperate with the Employment Agency, where students finishing the last year of Vocational School, get registered for a job. It was stated that businesses are interested to employ the students but sometimes students do not accept because they want to work abroad or their parents interfere in their decision making.

We described this meeting as fruitful because each participant had the opportunity to express his opinion based on his personal professional experience and the sector he comes from. In this discussion, the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation on the efforts and approaches to the development of the VET sector in Hospitality and Tourism were identified, on the other hand, the participants also mentioned the chances and opportunities for improvement

Our common meeting lasted one hour and a half, concluding it by taking some pictures all together.

in the future not only at the microeconomic level but also in the macroeconomic one. Some of the most important points that were highlighted and welcomed by all the participating parties are:

7. The hotel and hospitality sector in Albania is an important sector in the country's economic contribution. Which for every year has seen growth and development, being accompanied at the same time by an increase in requests for improvement.
8. There is a lack of qualified, well-trained workforce that shows interest in professional self-development.
9. Vocational schools in recent years have taken a better orientation to improve the quality of the curriculum in these study programs as a result of supporting European Programs through the implementation of projects or even the application of the dual system in Albania.
10. Schools identify the needs for an improvement of the qualifications/training of their staff/teachers.
11. In this meeting, the triangle of school - public employment institution - private business was identified, but it is necessary for increasing the digitization of internal employment processes and services. Most of the employment of young people is realized through private initiative or direct contact with business on the part of the student.
12. Albania has an increase in investments in this sector, and a higher cooperation between schools and the private sector is required, increasing the number of partnerships with them, as well as the part of professional practice by students.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Despite all the reform efforts that have been made, there is still a significant skills shortage and skills gap in the Albanian labour market, mainly due to insufficient collaboration between the world of education and the world of work. The major achievements of the last six years of the VET reform concern the establishment of a comprehensive legislative framework but the challenge is to make this legal framework operational. Operating in a system that is traditionally very centralistic, with a strong government influence, Albania's public

VET providers had in the past only little room for manoeuvre for individual actions. VET schools are supposed to set up business development units that establish and maintain long-term cooperation patterns with the local and regional business community to ensure quality work-based learning opportunities for their students. They are given a higher autonomy with regard to their VET programme planning and managing of budgets, through own-income generating activities and tendering for projects. All these tasks require entrepreneurial competences from the school management and administrative staff, and need a capacity building concept to ensure effective roll-out.

Albania is currently piloting a dual VET approach in the crafts sector; established by law in 2016, the National Chamber of Crafts has been given the legal mandate to establish dual forms of learning in crafts occupations. The closest forms of business cooperation take place at the provider level. Nevertheless, initiatives to establish school-business relations, to e.g. arrange work-based learning activities, originate in most cases from the schools. Although the presence of two business representatives on the school board is a legal requirement (one of which has to be elected as chair), businesses do not proactively approach VET providers. This is because business collaboration in VET is not historically rooted in Albania and, thus, remains a new, and for many Albanian companies (especially micro firms) still an unknown phenomenon.

The VET system is under-financed with regard to teacher salaries and skill-up needs, infrastructural deficits, funds for extracurricular activities, scholarships and dormitories, and innovative solutions are needed to explore additional sources of funding.

Donor programmes have been contributing enormously to the improvement of VET planning, design and delivery, to the revision of the legal framework, the enhancement of training infrastructure and capacitance of human resources, especially at the VET provider level, in the Albanian VET schools. Unfortunately, these ambitious donor projects very often remain islands of success, or even vanish shortly after the project expires, instead of becoming sustainable solutions, scaled-up and mainstreamed into a coherent national VET model. A system of coordinated efforts is urgently needed, supported by a computerised management information system allowing for better monitoring and utilisation of the models generated and good practices.

After the end of the National Employment and Skills Strategy, Albania has launched a new reform cycle, which calls for a careful consideration of the current context, shaped by the consequences of the 2019 earthquake, Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict. Considering all this, it becomes critical to redefine the main strategic areas of the reform by giving more focus to building lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens, implementing measures that promote social inclusion and territorial cohesion and fostering national, regional and local economic development.

The Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 represents an opportunity to set new strategic priorities in terms of designing a more agile, flexible and inclusive vocational education and training system. Strengthening the engagement of the private sector in the reform represents a key element in this regard, that needs to be incentivized further not only through new policy measures and mechanisms, but most importantly by restructuring existing programs so that they can deliver quick, effective, short-term training solutions responding to the pressing need for new skills and upskilling current workforce. This requires the adoption of a new mindset on building a system that is driven by demand.

There are a lot of initiatives and projects undertaken to help in improving VET sector but there is still a lot to do.

The VET system is under-financed with regard to teacher salaries and skill-up needs, infrastructural deficits, funds for extracurricular activities, scholarships and dormitories, and innovative solutions are needed to explore additional sources of funding.

Donor programmes have been contributing enormously to the improvement of VET planning, design and delivery, to the revision of the legal framework, the enhancement of training infrastructure and capacitating of human resources, especially at the VET provider level, in the Albanian VET schools. Unfortunately, these ambitious donor projects very often remain islands of success, or even vanish shortly after the project expires, instead of becoming sustainable solutions, scaled-up and mainstreamed into a coherent national VET model. A system of coordinated efforts is urgently needed, supported by a computerised management information system allowing for better monitoring and utilisation of the models generated and good practices.

The Co-Host project will contribute to improving a special target group of the VET sector of hospitality and tourism of Albania. The activities undertaken and planned in the upcoming months will involve directly the most interested parties to get more knowledge and experience, to have the opportunity to improve the main professional activities and to offer a better practice to the students. This period will help teachers to improve the quality of the teaching techniques and other daily activities in their daily work. The teachers

of the VET School should be given the possibility of gaining experience in EU countries, so they would pass the knowledge to the students.

We really strongly believe that every initiative will impact the labour market. The main aim of the project is to integrate the Western Balkans countries into the best practices of the European Union. We, the teachers have benefited a lot from the project in terms of experience and ideas. Now we are able to give some recommendations in order for things to be done in the best way possible.

The government should pay special attention to the VET schools because businesses need professionals. Local businesses should welcome and invite the students and give them the chance to work even though they are inexperienced.

Annex 6: National report – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The National report for Bosnia and Herzegovina was created by the Center for transition and development of civil society- CTRL Bihać and JU Srednja mješovita škola Bihać. It includes the information gathered on the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. Executive summary

This National report aims to reveal specific needs for VET training in tourism, marketing and hospitality at the national level, specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A mixed research methodology was used for the national report on training needs, combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved data collection, with all research activities running in parallel. Phase 2 involved the analysis of data collected in Phase 1.

The main findings of the National report indicate that it is necessary to harmonise curricula with the labor market in terms of cooperation between schools and employers, to ensure the accreditation procedures of teacher education programs and the creation of professional training catalogues, to expand the number of subjects for which seminars and workshops are organized, and reform initial teacher education and on-the-job training.

It was determined that the qualification framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina has only been partially implemented and no qualifications have been registered. Many existing qualifications are not based on learning outcomes, nor are they related to standards. Training providers, employers and learners are still not using the framework.

The collected data indicate the need to invest in the development of various skills such as: the application of internalization of vocational education and training, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and the use of quality assurance instruments, integration of technology into teaching, research skills and teaching design, communication skills and teamwork or critical thinking.

It is necessary to organize more education in this area about EU funds and application and additional information about international mobility, as well as the possibility of improving the acquired knowledge.

2. Introduction

Within the framework of the CO-HOST, a research was conducted which aimed to detect specific VET training needs in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality at national level, more specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main objectives of the national report are the following:

- To assess the training needs
- To identify the learning needs and political blockages
- To organize the training activities and content.

More specific objectives are the following:

- To capture data in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and the opportunities of tourism for the development of the region
- To detect and map existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The research report summarizes collected information as well as specific learning needs and political constraints for the development of the VET system in the country. In addition, the training needs report will be the starting point for the development of the capacity-building and internationalization activities.

3. Methodology

For the national training needs report, a mixed research methodology was used, combining quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

The quantitative method of data collection consisted of primary data collection through an online structured survey targeting representatives of the project target groups.

The qualitative method of data collection consisted of primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection was conducted through focus groups discussions and other formal or informal interviews. Secondary data collection was conducted through literature review and desk research for additional information.

The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 included data collection where all research activities were running in parallel. Phase 2 included analysis of the data collected in phase 1. The results of the analysis are presented in the national report for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4. Results

The Literature review and desk research includes information from different online resources, official government sources, school text books, NGOs' official documents and data, professional and academic resources, institutional stakeholders' statistics, and technical reports. The research was conducted at entity and district level which includes Federation BiH, Republica Srpska and Brčko District covering the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The results are categorised in the following subsections:

1. National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are three Strategies for tourism development, namely the Strategy for Tourism Development in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2027; the Strategy for Tourism Development 2021-2027 in Republica Srpska, and the Strategy for Tourism Development in Brčko District BiH 2021-2027, all three including priorities of human resources development with necessary mid-term and long-term measures to increase the number of qualified employees in the sector through education and training, and Improvement of existing personnel through formal and non-formal education and training in the workplace, as well as keeping the qualified workforce which was identified as one of the major issues in this industry. All three strategies have identified priorities/measures for tackling the issue of developing the pedagogical and technical skills which are ongoing and focused on the innovative planning and hiring of the best experts to ensure the competitiveness of B&H as a tourist destination through improved services and quality products. Beside these three formal documents, there is a clear intention and dedication of the national level portrayed in the Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2007 – 2013, adopted on April 11, 2007 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the EU VET II project to reform this area based on the EU CARDS program in B&H and the best practice of EU countries (e.g. Slovenia and Denmark). There is constant progress in the field of harmonizing curricula with the labor market in terms of cooperation between schools and employers by establishing advisory councils in schools and tripartite councils at the entity, canton, or Brčko District level of Bosnia and Herzegovina which can contribute to better cooperation between education and the labor market, admissions policy and more employability of students completing vocational education.

2. VET staff learning needs and constraints at national level

According to current legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, teachers holding positions in vocational schools are grouped into two main categories: teachers assigned to positions of general education subjects; and those assigned to positions in professional subjects (teachers and experienced assistants). Procedures and realization of professional training of teachers are regulated by secondary legal acts of competent educational authorities, as well as the responsibilities of teachers and the way of evaluating their work. Records on professional development of teachers are kept by schools, and in almost all existing regulations, a certain number of points are provided for professional development in the evaluation of teachers. However, it seems that teacher training was, and still is to a certain extent, a considerably neglected component of VET reform in the country, particularly in relation to the education of VET teachers. National policies and international programmes currently focus on this second area as a top priority.

The Ministry of Education and the pedagogical institutes provide regular in-service training for teachers, but there are problems with resources, quality, motivation, organisation and other issues. All pedagogical institutes responsible for professional teacher training are struggling with the issue of limited human resources. This means seminars and workshops are only organised for a reduced range of subjects, while teachers of other disciplines rarely get the opportunity for any training. Assistance provided by the EU and other donors is very influential on this front.

An additional problem for secondary schools is that many teachers of technical or specific disciplines come directly from non-teaching faculties into service in secondary vocational schools with no adequate preparation for professional teaching. New teachers therefore arrive unprepared to face students and unable to use modern teaching techniques. The inadequate professional development of established teachers does little to improve the situation and information provided by a series of strategies and documents developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last decade clearly underline a complex situation.

There is an urgent need not only for thorough reform of pre-service teacher training but also for intensive in-service training. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a range of political, structural, administrative, organisational and educational peculiarities that mean the issue of teacher training must be approached differently from how it is tackled in other countries.

It is necessary to ensure procedures for the accreditation of teacher training programs, and the creation of professional training catalogues, since these elements are still not fully part of practice. However, the existence of positive examples and practices at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the fact that the professional training of teachers is regulated by secondary legal acts opens up space for the improvement of procedures through their amendment and supplementation. The developed professional standards for primary and secondary school teachers, in the preparation of which representatives of relevant ministries, pedagogical institutes, higher education institutions and teachers from all cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brčko District participated, represent a good basis for the further development of the teaching profession.

3. Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector at national level

Qualifications and quality assurance Bosnia and Herzegovina's baseline qualifications framework was adopted by the Council of Ministers in March 2011. Qualifications are currently derived primarily from occupational standards, but the Bosnia and Herzegovina qualifications framework provides an opportunity to adapt the VET system to better meet the needs of employers by adopting a more sector-specific approach to qualifications in line with the needs of the economy. The Bosnia and Herzegovina qualifications framework has only been partially implemented and no qualifications have been registered. Many existing qualifications are not based on learning outcomes, nor do they relate to standards. Training providers, employers and learners still do not use the framework. Nonetheless, newly developed VET and higher education qualifications are based on learning outcomes and standards. Four qualifications have been formally included in the framework. The implementation of the baseline qualifications framework is overseen by an inter-sectoral committee chaired by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. A further milestone to be met by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities is to reference the baseline qualifications framework to the principles and criteria of the wider European Qualifications Framework. The validation of non-formal learning is part of the qualifications' framework action plan, but its implementation is currently limited. EU support to develop a system-based validation of non-formal learning is scheduled for the period 2020–2022. There are no quality assurance mechanisms in place to systematically monitor the quality of education inputs, outputs or outcomes (World Bank, 2019). However, the first steps towards a state-wide quality assurance framework for VET have been taken with a framework proposal developed in 2018. This borrows from European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET). As with the baseline qualifications framework, the quality assurance framework is designed to bring together the various education authorities and to act as a bridge to broader European developments and EU quality assurance networks (ETF, 2019). The proposal includes the furnishing of data by all education authorities (Cantons, Republika Srpska and Brčko District). The Bosnia and Herzegovina education authorities have not yet agreed to this proposal (Country Fiche 2020BiH)

According to the official Document "Improving the quality and relevance of professional education and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina" - based on the Riga Conclusions (2021 - 2030), one of the outlined priorities is the Qualifications for everyone with listed activities of developing new qualifications; ensuring balance between the necessary skills and job specific competencies; developing modular and flexible curricula which may

contribute to the strengthening of the vocational education and training and the mobility of students. The flexibility of professional education and training is made possible if the curricula and programs consist of relevant optional professional modules and not only compulsory ones, of which many should be conducted separately and through adult education and, if possible, offered as elective or optional modules for general education students as well.

Another listed priority is Promotion of the role and importance of key competencies in VET education with the ongoing activity of Participating in EU student exchange programs in the area of certain competencies encouraging schools to become more active in utilising the EU exchange opportunities.

4. Vet initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Best Practice Title	USAID Tourism BiH
Short Description	Project is working on advancing human capital in the tourism sector, improving access to finance for tourism businesses, developing innovative tourist products, harmonizing policies and regulations and revolutionizing destination branding and promotion.
Location/place	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	USAID in BiH Chemonics International
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	government and non-governmental organizations
Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	2020-2025
Target groups	Local governments, higher education institutions, people with disabilities, cultural institutions, DODATI
Supporting Stakeholders	Local, cantonal, entity, district and national governmental institutions DODATI
Sources of funding	Chemonics International 20 million USD
Description of activities	Fostering rural tourism, establishing international standards and criteria, supporting world-class events, advancing digital marketing in tourism sector, bringing best practices from global leaders, global promotion and be-to-be networking, creating world-class tourism

	products and experiences, modernizing vocational education for excellence in hospitality
Conclusions	USAID Tourism initiative will contribute to economic growth and social harmony in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through a broad-based approach to sustainable tourism development.
Links and references	https://bit.ly/3RS8qHT
Contact person	USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Turizam) info@turizambih.ba

Best Practice Title	Sarajevo Tourism Summit 2023
Short Description	Through panel discussions, case studies and presentations the two-day Sarajevo Tourism Summit covered topics from the hotel industry and tourism such as: trends in the hotel industry for 2023, new technologies and their applications, finding, hiring and training the workforce, sales and marketing in tourism, channels for advertising and promotion of hotels and destinations.
Location/place	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	Business Concierge Center Sarajevo TOPCOM Sarajevo
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	Joint effort of several associations and agencies from the tourism and marketing sector
Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	26/27 April 2023
Target groups	The Summit brought together experts/employees from the fields of tourism, hotel management, hospitality, as well as related branches of the economy.

Supporting Stakeholders	https://tourismsummit.ba/ (sponsorship) 300 national and international presenters and participants
Sources of funding	N/A
Description of activities	The Summit included activities such as familiarization with new trends, developments, current events in the field of tourism and catering in the BiH region and other surrounding countries.
Conclusions	Tourism as a natural and true need, which is experiencing its reincarnation at this time, in the open spaces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as an economic branch represents an important basis for building new values and relationships between people.
Links and references	https://tourismsummit.ba/
Contact person	Business Concierge Center Sarajevo info@bccbih.com

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4.2 Online survey

Sample description

The survey was prepared in copies and 64 of them were filled in.

It was distributed by email.

Sample composition:

- 84 % of respondents are from the field of education
- 9 % are from business associations/providers from the field of tourism
- 3 % from the field of catering and other sectors.
- 48 % of the respondents are employed as Vocational training and Training providers
- 16 % are adult trainers
- 14 % are teachers in vocational schools
- 5 % of respondents are from the Office administrator/support and Accommodation hospitality manager.

Age:

- 53 %, 35-49 age group
- 38 %, 50-64 age group
- 6 %, 25-34 age group
- 3 %, 18-24 age group

Gender:

- 83 % of respondents are female and 17 % are male.

All respondents are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

52 % of respondents are familiar with sustainable tourism

To make tourism more attractive 21 % of respondents believes that it is necessary to work more on Safeguard of cultural and natural heritage; 18 % of the respondents believe in importance of establishing strong partnership with local tourism businesses and focus more on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness, while 10 %, and less, of respondents believe that diversity the range of courses to cater various aspects of tourism and inviting industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and professionals to deliver guest lectures and workshops is important for achieving this goal. 29 % of respondents believe that continuous education of VET staff is important when it comes to the attractiveness of vocational education. Participation of VET learners in mobility activity is considered important by 22 % of respondents, while 17 % believe that participation of VET staff in mobility activities is has a great role in attractiveness of vocational education.

For the attractiveness of the sector, the respondents said that Promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women (19 % of them) is also important, and 13 % of the answers indicated the importance of recognition of VET learner's competencies.

According to the respondents, the three most relevant skills are, as following:

- technical skills: developing VET internalization strategies, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and usage of quality assurance instruments;
- pedagogical skills: integration of technology in teaching, research skills and instructional design. Respondents believe (as many as 17 %) that the segment self-assessment/evaluation as a reflective process is important.
- soft skills: communication skills, teamwork or critical thinking, adaptability and problem-solving are also important.

50 % of respondents declared that knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education is useful, 23 % believe that it is very useful, 3 % consider them as not useful while 7 % of respondents are neutral.

84 % of respondents have no experience with international mobility of staff. Those who participated in mobility programs say they were participating in mobilities with Teaching and training assignments (60 %) and Course training (40 %).

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

14 % respondents have designed, managed and coordinated mobility arrangements and projects for learners.

Project proposal and submission as well as Funding/co-funding are the challenging parts in organizing and conducting international VET mobility. 11 % of respondents believe that finding partners for proposals is also challenging.

Boosted quality of the educational services provided and access to innovative/ new/practical teaching approaches are considered as benefits from international VET mobilities for a VET provider (25 % for each). 14 % of respondents consider those mobilities enriching organizational know-how and also boosted prospects for international cooperation. 8 % considers that those mobilities are improving organizational image.

Boosted skills, knowledge and competences relevant to their current/future occupation, 50 % of respondents consider as benefits for participants/learners in international VET mobilities. Also, 16 % of respondents consider access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches very useful. 9 % of respondents consider that improved career prospects and foreign language skills are just as benefits from international mobility.

Even 83 % respondents are not aware of EU instruments for the recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility, but only 33 % says that they need support in defining and implementing them.

Respondents believe that they need additional education in this area and additional information about international mobility itself. They also believe that it is necessary to pay more attention to practice during schooling.

72 % respondents are interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes in order to learn something new (29 %) and be able to improve existing knowledge (69 %).

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

95 % of respondents are not aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing.

- One of the initiatives is realized with USAID's Sustainable Tourism Development Project.

Most respondents are familiar with sustainable tourism. To make tourism more attractive, it is necessary to invest greater efforts in Safeguard of cultural and natural heritage and to establish strong partnership with local tourism businesses with more focus on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness.

Final consideration

It is necessary to carry out continuous education of VET staff, as well as greater involvement of both VET staff and VET learners in mobility activities.

Respondents are of the opinion that it is necessary to invest more in developing skills such as: developing VET internalization strategies, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and usage of quality assurance instruments, integration of technology in teaching, research skills and instructional design, communication skills, and teamwork or critical thinking.

Only 50 % of respondents declared that knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education is useful and even 84 % of respondents have never participated in an international mobility program.

We can conclude that the respondents, even though aware of the benefits that arise from mobility, do not have enough knowledge to write project applications, and find it difficult to find partners for cooperation.

The largest number of respondents is not aware of the EU instruments for recognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility, but they did not express any significant interest in finding out.

There is a general opinion that it is necessary to organize more education in this area and additional information about international mobility, as well as the possibility to improve the acquired knowledge.

Almost all respondents are not aware of any existing VET initiatives in this sector.

4.3 Focus group discussions

Sample and method description

The focus group discussion was attended by 10 participants. The invitation for the focus group was sent to a heterogeneous group of people:

Age:

25-34, 30 % participants
35-49, 40 % participants
50-64, 10 % participants
65-74, 20 % participants

Gender: 30 % men
70 % women

Participants of the round table belong to different occupations and professions:

Focus group results

In addition to the cultural and historical heritage, tourism is mostly built around natural resources. Therefore education on environmental conservation should be introduced additionally, from pre-school through primary and secondary education. It is necessary to give more importance to environmental organizations through direct contact with the local population, promoting a clean environment. It is important to invest more efforts with the aim of preserving the environment.

The participants expressed the need for organizing workshops, round tables, visits to schools, but also visits from schools to other institutions, in order to transfer the interest for work in the field of tourism to the students.

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

- Education institutions (principal and three VET teachers from three schools that are already included in the national network);

- Business associations in the field of tourism (independent tourism entrepreneur, representatives of the National Park "Una", the Tourist Board of the City of Bihać, and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage);

- Catering and hotel industry (representatives of Hotel "Kostelski buk" and hotel "Paviljon/Safir")

The discussion at the round table was conducted with the help of a moderator. The moderator is a reference scientific worker in the field of management with many years of experience in tourism, entrepreneurship, etc.

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

To enable a mutual flow of information about the needs of the employees in the field of tourism, as well as information for students about job opportunities, salaries and other openings offered in this sector.

The participants are aware of the existence of EU programs and tools in the field of vocational education, but they do not apply to them sufficiently. The main reason is doing business through the treasury and the availability of funds after their approval. In addition, it was concluded that the stakeholders in this sector do not have sufficient knowledge to write the applications themselves, and that the workshops that are organized for training in writing project applications are quite theoretical and less practical. Therefore, the participants do not acquire sufficient skills for the preparation of project proposals and application to EU programs and funds.

Institutions that successfully apply and are awarded the fund face other problems: lengthy procedures for implementation through complicated public procurement procedures and works in stages, all of which lead to slow implementation of activities and slow mapping of the tourist offer.

The local Ministry of Education adopted the Regulations on the performance of internships, which aim at the education and professional development of students studying for all practical occupations, including in the field of tourism. The shortcoming of this Regulation is that it allows only 20 working days of professional practice per student. However, this can also be seen as a big shift compared to the previous period when there was no such possibility at all. By doing an internship, students acquire practical knowledge and skills and make contact with possible future employers.

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Due to insufficient financial support from the founder and the Ministry, VET schools mostly individually find opportunities for additional education of teaching staff in order to meet the needs prescribed by VET education. However, it was concluded that a higher number of professional development opportunities for teaching staff is needed.

VET schools independently sign memoranda of understanding for students' professional practice and internship. Each school year there is an increasing number of these memoranda, as well as contracts for the sponsorship of school offices for teaching practice.

Final consideration

Certain municipalities/cities have provided certain funds in their annual budget to support the realization of professional practice/internship of students in VET education.

The tourist offer is quite attractive and rich, and is mainly based on natural resources and cultural and historical heritage. There is no national brand around which tourism would develop as an economic branch. In many parts, tourism is still a seasonal activity, therefore it is necessary to initiate activities and develop strategies in order to develop the touristic offer throughout the year (e.g. congress tourism, spa tourism).

The lack of qualified workers in the tourism industry is also an obvious problem. There is also a shortage of timely information about supply and demand in the market. Students also lack information about employment possibilities after graduation.

It is necessary to ensure a partnership approach and enable adequate and timely circulation of information among all participants in this process. It was concluded that education is influenced by other factors as well (insufficient finances, inadequate teaching staff) which are crucial in the final outcome and competencies of the graduated staff.

It is necessary for sustainable tourism, among other things, to develop and educate students' entrepreneurial skills, especially for professions that require four years of education.

It is necessary to achieve communication both vertically and horizontally. It is essential to provide support to each other, and we should copy and apply the positive practice as well.

It is necessary to make every type of information available to all interested parties, and the project is one way to achieve this.

It was concluded that nowadays, when tourism is becoming the developing branch in this area, a joint downfall of both educational system and community is the poor response of students to enrollment for these occupations.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

In the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, various documents have been adopted that support the strategic development of human resources through planned education and training, but also the retention of an already qualified workforce. Priorities for solving the issue of pedagogical and technical skills development were also identified, which are continuously focused on innovative planning and engaging the best experts in order to ensure BiH competitiveness as a tourist destination through improved services and quality products. In addition, through the various adopted documents, the country's clear determination to

reform this area based on European practice is recognized. The possibility of constant progress through harmonizing curricula and labor market in terms of cooperation between schools and employers through the establishment of advisory councils in schools and tripartite councils at the level of Entity, Canton, or Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized, which can contribute to better cooperation between education and the labor market, enrolment policy and greater employability of students who complete vocational education.

Institutionally, regular professional development of teachers is ensured, but there are problems with resources, quality, motivation, organization and other issues. All pedagogical institutes responsible for professional training of teachers struggle with the problem of limited human resources. This means that seminars and workshops are organized only for a small number of subjects, while teachers of other disciplines rarely have the opportunity for any training. The aid provided by the EU and other donors is very influential in this regard. There is an urgent need not only for a thorough reform of initial teacher education, but also for intensive on-the-job training. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a number of political, structural, administrative, organizational and educational peculiarities which imply that the issue of teacher training must be approached differently from the way it is handled in other countries.

It is necessary to ensure the procedures for the accreditation of teacher education programs, and the creation of a catalogue of professional development, since these elements have not yet fully entered into practice. However, the existence of positive examples and practices at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the fact that the professional development of teachers is regulated by secondary legal acts opens up space for the improvement of procedures through their amendment and supplementation. Professional standards for primary and secondary school teachers have been drawn up, in which representatives of relevant ministries, pedagogical institutes, higher education institutions and teachers from all cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brčko District participated, and represent a good basis for the further development of teacher education.

The qualification framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina has only been partially implemented and no qualifications have been registered. Many existing qualifications are not based on learning outcomes, nor are they related to standards. Training providers, employers and learners are still not using the framework. Nevertheless, newly developed vocational and higher education qualifications are based on learning outcomes and standards. A further milestone to be fulfilled by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the reference of the basic qualification framework to the principles and criteria of the wider European qualification framework. The evaluation of non-formal learning is part of the qualifications framework action plan, but its implementation is currently limited.

Two major VET initiatives in sustainable tourism and marketing, namely USAID Tourism initiative and Sarajevo Tourism Summit 2023. Both initiatives represent an important basis for building new values and relationships between people in BiH, the sector of tourism and will contribute to economic growth and social harmony in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through a broad-based approach to sustainable tourism development.

Using quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, it was established that the majority of respondents are familiar with sustainable tourism. It was jointly concluded that in order for tourism to be more attractive, it is necessary to invest greater efforts in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and to establish a strong partnership with local tourism companies with a greater focus on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness.

It is necessary to carry out continuous education of professional staff, as well as greater involvement of both professional staff and students in mobility activities.

The collected data indicate the need to invest in the development of various skills such as: the application of internalization of vocational education and training, adaptability to new technologies and software applications and the use of quality assurance instruments, integration of technology into teaching, research skills and teaching design, communication skills and teamwork or critical thinking.

In addition, the collected data provide the conclusion that potential users do not have enough knowledge to write project applications, and find it difficult to find partners for cooperation, but also that there is a general lack of knowledge of EU instruments for recognizing and evaluating competences acquired in international mobility. Therefore, the overall opinion is that it is necessary to organize more education in this area and additional information on international mobility, as well as opportunities to improve the acquired knowledge.

It is necessary to ensure a partnership approach and enable the appropriate and timely circulation of information among all participants in this process. All the collected data indicate that education is influenced by other factors (insufficient financial resources, inadequate teaching staff) that are decisive in the final outcome and competencies of the graduated staff.



Annex 7: National report – Kosovo

The national report for Kosovo is prepared by Universum International College in Kosova with its headquarters at Lipjan municipality. This report is based on the grounds of the data collected from representatives of the different VET schools operating in different regions of the country and other partners that play an important role on tourism, marketing and sustainability.

1. Executive summary

The main objective of this report was to identify key demands and requirements that VET offering schools and other eligible institutions face when addressing training programs and activities on tourism, marketing, and sustainability in the region of Kosova.

The research methodology applied in conducting the given research included qualitative method and quantitative method. The first method that was applied in this research included a focus group with representatives of VET schools and other institutional partners, whereas the second method applied was a survey distributed to responsible respondents that deliver training or teaching at those respective institutions.

After data collection, quantitative data were analysed and further synthesised. The summary of the online survey is presented at the online survey section of this report. On the other hand, the qualitative data collected from the focus group are elaborated and presented under the focus group section within this report.

The findings highlight the need of VET providers to enrol school's students at their programs with greater school performance since for time being students that join such schools have moderate performance at their primary school. Mechanism to target good performing students and to enrol them at VET schools is of vital importance. Kosovo is a country without due experience in the field of tourism and it would be required to share experiences with other EU countries by visiting and learning directly from those places that already are known for well-established tourism, as well as good and sustained tourism practices. Free movement to EU countries is another identified barrier for VET providers and students. Integration of the information technology in teaching and learning is the most important and relevant pedagogical skill at VET school's providers that needs to be grown. Communication is a key soft skill identified with being the most important requirement in the sector that respondent represents.

2. Introduction

The objective of this national report is to apply quantitative and qualitative methods in conducting research to identify key specific VET training needs in Tourism, Marketing and Hospitality at national level in Kosovo. The aim of the research is to capture data in Kosovo regarding the training needs of the VET sector with special attention to the labour market and any other opportunity of tourism for the development of the country. Also, to identify existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing.

These needs are to be addressed following the given research questions:

- ✓ What are the training needs of VET providers?
- ✓ What are the learning needs and barriers?
- ✓ What activities/actions or training are required at these institutions?

In this report are presented all constructs of study after data collection on learning and training needs, obstacles that VET organizations face and activities/actions/initiatives that shall be adopted.

3. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study includes quantitative method and qualitative method. The qualitative methods applied semi structured questions for interview, whereas for the quantitative method a structured

questionnaire was applied and distributed online to the teaching staff and trainers in VET schools and Vet provider institutions.

distributed online to the teaching staff and trainers in VET schools

The focus group meeting was held on August 18, 2023, with the managerial staff. It is important to note that in the focus group meeting there were taking place mainly heads of the following schools and institutions from Peja region: VET School "Rifat Gjota", VET school "Shaban Spahija" and VET school "Ali Hadri"; institutions from Suahereke region include: VET School "Abdyl Rama" and VET School Skender Laurasi" and institutions from region of Prishtina include Chamber of Hospitality and Tourism in Kosovo in Prishtine.

The focus group interview was converted into transcription and key research unit constructs were identified and further analysed and synthesised. Simultaneously, data collected from respondents were collected, analysed, and summarised into findings and results that further were elaborated to identify needs and challenges VET schools face in addressing issues related to the technical skills required, learning needs, sustainability initiatives on tourism, sustainability and marketing.

4. Results

The National Report of Kosovo on tourism, marketing and sustainability is driven by several interrelated components such as literature review, focus group and survey. The literature review follows the clarification of the problem in the formal research process. The research unit constructs are initially identified and categorized under four themes. The background research to further refine the understanding of phenomena studied is conducted to ensure that past work has been considered in clarifying the scope of the project. There are many sources of literature: newspapers, journal articles, conference proceedings, textbooks, syndicated studies, government documents, as well as many other sources available on online databases. The most important components identified are described in the following sections.

4.1 Literature review and desk research

The Government of Kosovo is responsible for VET education, VET system and building up of the appropriate skillful labor force through adoption of the following legal framework:

- ✓ Law No. 04/L-183 on the Vocational Education and Training.
- ✓ Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications.
- ✓ Law No. 06/L-046 on Education Inspectorate in Kosovo.
- ✓ Law No.03/L-068 on Education in the Municipalities of Kosovo.
- ✓ Law No. 04/L-205 on the Employment Agency of Kosovo.
- ✓ Administrative Instruction (MEST) No. 14/2014 Agency of Vocational Education and Training and Adults' Education (AVETA).
- ✓ Administrative Instruction (MEST) No. 28/2914 on Criteria and Procedures for the Verification of the Occupational Standard.
- ✓ Administrative Instruction (MEST) No. 32/2014 on Criteria and Procedures for Quality Assurance in the Vocational Education and Training Institutions – Internal Processes.
- ✓ Administrative Instruction (MEST) No. 35/2014 on Criteria and Procedures for the Validation and Approval of National Qualification and Accreditation of Institutions Providing Qualifications in Kosovo.

From this perspective, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure due infrastructure and systems to facilitate tourism in education. It is evident that tourism represents a relatively small share of Kosovo's GDP. Businesses in tourism are mainly family-owned and characterised by their micro and small enterprise nature. There are required institutional actions to unlock the full potential of tourism in Kosovo. However, it is not possible to refer to correct numbers of tourists in the country due to inaccuracy of inputs. Government took measures to improve tourism statistics through software E-tourism which is an obligation to all business owners of hotel facilities, to register visitors online in a software system that sends electronically the data to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Internal Affairs (Jashari, 2018). Most likely, these inputs will

enable real time data collection on number of arrivals and departures of tourist travelling in the country and can help project the future trends of tourism.

1. National trends in tourism pedagogical and technical skills

The considerations of the OECD (2021) are that “Deficiencies in the education system and mismatches between the labour market and field of study means Kosovo suffers skills shortages despite high unemployment rates for people of all skill levels. Kosovo should use its whole education and training infrastructure, including vocational education and training (VET), to provide adults with remedial education and improve their vocational skills”. There is another research finding that concludes that “most of the young people are not equipped with the adequate skills to be competitive in the labor market because they pursue careers without deliberately examining the needs of the market for those particular professions” (Vocational Education and Training in Kosovo: Challenges and Opportunities, (2019).

In relation to pedagogical and technical skills, especially in tourism, it is noted that skills are not classified by labour category. It is a very specific observation that business owners or business managers in a country often have an educational background in accountancy, marketing, law, economics, etc. Following EC (2001) except educational background the managerial level in business is expected to possess the following skills and competences: “computer skills, business and strategic planning, strategic alliances, management skills, management through visions and values, yield management, accounting, product development, innovation, human resource management, destination management, project management, management skills to cope with globalisation influences, change management, marketing and sales skills”.

In detecting training needs, and in devising measures it is required to design proper educational curriculum. As per Tahirsylaj and Fazliu (2021) the country is still in the early phase of developing curriculum expertise. Despite this fact, Tahirsylaj & Wahlström (2019) consider as “paradoxical” the latest competency-based curriculum reform in Kosovo—a non-EU state—is much more in line with the EU and EC curriculum guidelines than that in Sweden. Still, the alignment of Kosovo’s curriculum with the EC key competences is somewhat externally influenced, as the competency-based curriculum framework of 2011 was supported by the technical expertise of international donors and stakeholders, such as UNICEF, UNESCO IBE and the EU”. Moreover, another research reveals that “curriculum policy making in Kosovo has relied on adoption and borrowing of a set of policies promoted by international organizations without much attention to the educational perspectives that historically and traditionally frame specific goals of education and definition of educational content” (Tahirsylaj & Fazliu ,2021).

2. VET staff learning needs and constraints at national level

The Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETA) is responsible for ensuring the administration and leadership of Institutions of Vocational Education Training and for Adults (IVETA). The National Qualification Authority is responsible for establishing and maintaining the Kosovo Qualification Framework and its relationship with the European Qualification Framework. It also regulates the award of qualifications and accreditation of VET providers to ensure the overall quality system for VET in Kosovo.

The VET staff learning needs identified at national level include the following: digital/blended learning and online learning so that it would enable VET providers to use modes that suit their needs. The next skill required is learning of foreign languages and adequate communication and presenting skills. Finally, VET providers need to develop further their research skills in developing research topics and being able to write research proposal including appropriate methodology.

The main difficulties identified at the national level is the financing and operating of VET schools. It has a large cost. In addition, there is no fund available for research at these schools, advancement of staff learning needs such as learning new technology applications or communication skills.

3. Quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET sector at national level

The purpose of the education and instruction system is offering teaching and gaining learning that takes place in school education. The component of the system is grounded on curriculum. The criteria on standards expected from schools and the learning outcomes of students, including assessment tools and modes, and other elements that support instruction such as field visits, field projects, internships or mobility facilitate the learning process.

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) provides a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition between the NQF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). NQA is the designated National Coordination Point for participation in the EQF process (National Qualification Authority, 2020).

In terms of tourism quality of mobility and recognition of learning outcomes, Kandiah (2016) suggests enhancement of “co-operation between the government, academia and the private sector by establishing a tourism skills council in order to bridge the skills gap in tourism and enhance employer awareness about the benefits of employee training”. Hence, there is no relevant national data that would enable us to refer and address quality in mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in the VET schools in national level except the identified “gap between Kosovar and German qualification standards considered to be wide during the YES project period 2017-2021” Global Skills Partnership (2021).

4. Vet initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing:

Tourism in the country represents a business sector that could enhance job security, career development and training provision. The workforce shortages are of a concern on a national level. However, there are efforts made towards promotion and initiation of initiatives on tourism and marketing. Unfortunately, there is no available data on current ongoing projects in the country related to sustainable tourism, but there are few initiatives undertaken mainly by GIZ, Swisscontact, LuxDev, USAID and at a local level that addressed tourism. No specific data is provided on lengths of the projects or amount invested.

There are great opportunities for VET schools to initiate promotion of service quality and enhance the image of the businesses that provide such services in the tourism sector. The level of tourist satisfaction and the value of the products offered can be promoted as well.

Best Practice Title	NO PRESENT PROJECT IDENTIFIED
Short Description	
Location/place	
Governance (Owner/Coordinator - Partners involved -if any)	
Legal form (of the owner or/and the activity/intervention)	
Timeframe (of the project/activity/initiative)	
Target groups	
Supporting Stakeholders	

Sources of funding	
Description of activities	
Conclusions	
Links and references	
Contact person	

Reference

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4.2 Online survey

Sample description

The survey was sent electronically to respondents (40 filled questionnaires).

Sample composition:

The sector in which respondents work includes education institutions 93%, trade unions 3%, business associations/providers in the field of tourism 3% and from other institutions 3%.

The current job of respondents includes vocational education and training providing 72%, adult trainer 14%, professional in the business support services 5%, other 5%, tour organizer 2% , other entries 2% and teacher at AAP 1%

Age:

Age of respondents ranges from group age of 18-24 to 50-64. Many of the respondents belong to the group age of 50-64 indicating 45%, followed with second group age 35-49 years old 35%, then group age of 25-34 indicating 15% and finally

Survey results

Familiarity of respondents with the sustainable tourism ranges 48% of those that do have knowledge about sustainable tourism, whereas the remaining of 53% indicated that they lack the knowledge and familiarity with the sustainable tourism.

From 106 combined optional responses provided on which of the following actions/measures should be implemented to make tourism in your sector more attractive and 24% of respondents declared safeguard cultural and natural heritage; 22% indicated other entries; 18% indicated provide innovative digital solutions; 15% establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses; 11% indicated having entrepreneurs and professionals to deliver guest lectures and workshops and 10% indicated to focus more on sustainable practices and environmental awareness.

Concerning the actions/ measures that should be implemented to make vocational education in respondent's sector more attractive the highest ranked activity is continuous education of VET staff (26%); participation of the VET learners at mobility activity (25%); participation of the VET staff at mobility activities (20%); promotion of the youth employment particularly for young women (19%); and recognition of the learners' competences (10%).

The most relevant technical skills as per respondents' sector (94 responses) includes developing VET internationalization strategies (35%); adaptability to new technologies and software application (27%); using quality assurance instruments (20%).

The most relevant pedagogical skills in sector that represents the respondent (total 98 optional three responses) includes integration of technology in teaching (38%); research skills (30%); self-assessment/evaluation of a reflective process (24%) and instructional design (8%).

The most relevant soft skills in respondents' sector (total three optional questions-139 responses) included differ entries than those provided (27%); communication skills (23%); teamwork (16%); problem-solving (12%); critical thinking (12%); and time management (11%).

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

the age group of 18-24 of respondents in this sample is 5%.

Gender:

The gender of respondents is 63% females, 35% males and 3% of respondents preferred not to indicate their gender.

All the respondents are from Kosovo

Respondents find the knowledge of EU programs and tools in VET education very useful at a scale of 75%, useful (23%) and neutral is 1% of respondents.

Experience with international mobility has 25% of respondents whereas the remaining of 75% declared that they did not have any experience.

The experience of the respondents with mobility indicates that 60% of respondents attended courses and training (2 to 30 days) ; job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers (20%); and teaching or training assignment (2 to 365 days) for teachers (20%).

40% of respondents indicated that they have designed, managed, and coordinated mobility arrangements and projects for learners, whereas many of respondents (60%) indicated that they did not.

The most challenging aspects for respondents when organizing and conducting VET international mobility is funding and co-funding (35%); organization of the learning and working program (20%); project proposal writing and submission (18%); findings partners for proposals (15%); logistics 8%; and other entries (5%).

The benefits considered from international VET mobilities for a VET provider include boosted quality of the educational services provided (28%); boosted attractiveness of the organization/institution (20%); access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (18%); other entries (15%); enriched organizational know-how (13%) and improved organizational image (8%).

Benefits for respondents concerning participants/learners in international VET mobilities include boosted skills, knowledge, and competences relevant to their current-future occupation (43%); access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches (18%); improved career prospects (15%); widened personal and professional horizons (13%); improved transversal skills (8%); and other entries (5%).

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

Awareness of EU instruments for cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility indicated 30% of respondents, whereas 70% of respondents indicate no awareness. Support in defining and



implementation them require 45% of respondents and 55% of respondents declared no need for support.

Respondents raised the need for expanding educational profile games benefiting from international mobility, institutional support, training , projects, financing, and regular communication.

Interest in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes expressed 78% of respondents, 5% do not have any interest and neutral are 18%.

Respondents (31 responses) that want to improve existing knowledge indicate 58% of respondents, followed with 32% of respondents that want to learn new things, 6% are interested in improving existing knowledge because it is free of charge (6%) and 3% because they have spare time.

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Only 3% of respondents are aware of existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in Kosovo, whereas 97% are not.

The sustainability tourism in Kosovo has not progressed much and has not been promoted adequately due to lack of addressing the sector vigilantly in national institutional programs, the country's complex sectors and issues to be addressed. Hence, most respondents (53%) said that they require familiarity with sustainable tourism.

Safeguarding cultural and natural heritage is the most important action that should be undertaken while making the sector of tourism attractive.

Key challenges of VET school provider identified are funding and co-funding, organization of the learning and working programs, and project proposal writings. To overcome these barriers, it is required to get international support by mobilities to boost quality of education services provided and attractiveness of the VET schools and institutions as well as providing learning new practical teaching approaches. This is endorsed with the evidence that 58% of respondents would like to improve existing knowledge. In addition, the fact that only 30% of respondents are aware of EU instruments for cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility strongly highlights the need.

Final consideration

Integration of the technology in teaching and learning is the most important and relevant pedagogical skill at VET school's providers. Communication is a key soft skill identified with being the most important requirement in sector that respondent represents. The development of VET internationalization strategies is the most relevant technical skill required.

Provided that 75% of VET providers and trainers declared that they did not have an opportunity to benefit from international mobility, indicates a concerning issue to be addressed very seriously with EU country partners in the education sector. International mobility must be enhanced in the VET schools and institutions in the country. The limitations of the people of Kosovo to free movement, especially in European Union countries, as well as long procedures for Schengen visa issuances, including high costs of such visa applications for visa applicants has created serious barriers in opportunities to learn new skills and gain practical experiences for many VET training providers and schoolteachers. This is supported by the evidence that 75% of respondents find the knowledge of EU programs and tools in VET education very useful.

4.3 Focus group discussions

Sample and method description	Focus group results
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The focus group online session was held on August 18, 2023. There were 7 participants that had managerial positions at their schools or institutions.

Age:

Respondents belonged to only one group age 50 to 64 years old.

Gender:

All participants were male.

Tourism is an unexplored business opportunity in the country of Kosovo. The economic growth of the region of Peja is based mainly on tourism. There are many capacities that the region of Peja has to offer in terms of sustainability and tourism. The key elements of economic development in this region derive from water resources, mountains, and beautiful countryside: thermal waters, Rugova mountains, water springs and good quality of the food and services offered at traditional restaurants and hotels/hostels nearby the city of Peja. Winter tourism at Peja Skiing Centre in the village of Boga has a potential to

Sustainable tourism and the attractiveness of the tourism labour market

Participants to the focus group session present VET schools in country and another VET training provider as explained below:

Education institutions

Education institutions from Peja region:

VET School “Rifat Gjota”, VET school “Shaban Spahija” and VET school “Ali Hadri”;

Education institutions from Suahereke region:

VET School “Abdyl Rama” and VET School Skender Laurasi”

Non-profit organization/NGO on tourism

Region of Prishtina

Training Provider Organization:

Chamber of Hospitality and Tourism in Kosovo.

The focus group was moderated by a Professor Assistant/ Researcher with research interest on tourism and sustainability from Department of

expand further the business though sustained investments.

In the highway between Komoran to Prizren there is no business activity undertaken so far. Hence, villagers of nearby villages can sell their products at certain assigned marketplaces after municipalities issue permits to offer such services. Even one marketplace having access on highway could enable farmers to sell their agri-cultural products .

The VET schools in Peja and Suhareke region are very engaging and have participated in a variety of projects, mobility projects , including sending students on mobility. According to the principles of these schools, the benefits that students gain during mobility offered by external providers is an increase of familiarity with foreign study programs and an exchange of learning by demonstration of what our students learned at our schools.

The VET school “Ali Hadri” and “Shaban Spahija” in Peja exchanged students on mobility as a beneficiary of the project TREDIUM in Denmark. The schoolteachers joined their students for two weeks, while the students stayed there a month.

Majority of the teaching staff in the Prizren region has economic background and some of them have tourism background as an additional supplementary training is required on tourism. Programs designed for teaching staff specifically addressing tourism and sustainability are highly desirable.

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education



Management and Business
at Universum International
College.

The labour force demand in the country is high and students of VET schools after their graduation are easily accommodating to the labour market. Based on the above, it was emphasised that opening of the career centres at primary schools can have a positive effect on having students defining their profiles at early stages.

CISCO Academy financed from USAID will commence its activity starting from January 2023 at VET School "Ali Hadri" and "Shaban Spahija". The aim of this project is training of staff that teach IT and electronics, and the knowledge gained could be related to initiating a project for promotion of tourism at a VET school level.

The school in Shiroke is planning to initiate new programs in tourism since they already have in place a program on hospitality. They made a field visit in Japan and have visited their rural zones that indicated an extraordinary learning experience to them. They plan to create infrastructure and to invest in rural tourism in cooperation with municipal and central level government of the country, so that they could stimulate inhabitants of that region to produce local organic products and to introduce them to visitors as domestic products. This could be a big step forward in developing sustainable tourism in this zone. Infrastructure improvement of rural zones and workforce preparedness and skilled students that could guide the touristic groups and provide sustained information to the visitors will be the aim of such a program.

VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing

Final consideration

Students of the region of Suhareka are activists at promotion events and show trades made by all famous businesses in the country such as Frutex, Burimi AG, Euro Kosova Holding etc.

It was concluded by the participants that Kosovo is with many tourists and less tourism. From this dimension it is evident that there is a need to institutionally explore new paths for sustainable tourism by creating travel opportunities with minimal impact and positive benefits for destinations and their communities. Simultaneously using ecotourism to educate tourists about nature and the environment, and travellers taking part in conservation and cultural activities.

On the other hand, following previous exchange experiences and feedback that VET schools and institutions received from students after they came from mobility indicated great input especially in terms of development of communication skills. Another possibility is Involvement of students in paid internships by national businesses.

VET providers are making efforts in enrolling students with greater school performance because for time being students that join such schools have moderate performance at their primary school. Mechanism to target good performing students and to enrol them at VET schools is of vital importance.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Tourism sector represents a relatively small share of total Kosovo's GDP. Data from governments indicates that businesses in tourism are mostly micro and small enterprises and more specifically family businesses. Country suffers due experience in the field of tourism and it would be required to share experiences with other countries by visiting and learning directly from countries that already are known for well-established tourism,

as well as good and sustained tourism practices. The sustainability tourism in Kosovo has not progressed much and has not been promoted adequately due to lack of addressing the sector vigilantly in national institutional programs. The country's underdeveloped tourism sector must be addressed. There is no awareness or familiarity with sustainable tourism following the data from the survey.

Key challenges of VET school providers identified are funding and co-funding, organization of the learning and working programs, and project proposal writings. To overcome these barriers, it is required to get international support by mobilities to boost quality of education services provided and attractiveness of the VET schools and institutions as well as providing learning new practical teaching approaches. This is endorsed with the evidence that 58% of respondents would like to improve existing knowledge. In addition, the fact that only 30% of respondents are aware of EU instruments for cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility strongly highlights the need.

Integration of the technology in teaching and learning is the most important and relevant pedagogical skill at VET school's providers. Communication is a key soft skill identified with being the most important requirement in the sector that respondent represents. The development of VET internationalization strategies is the most relevant technical skill required. On the other hand, following previous exchange experiences and feedback that VET schools and institutions received from students after they came from mobility indicated great input especially in terms of development of communication skills. Another possibility is Involvement of students in paid internships by national businesses.

The Fact that 75% of VET providers and trainers declared that they did not have an opportunity to benefit from international mobility, indicates a concerning issue to be addressed very seriously with EU country partners in the education sector. International mobility must be enhanced in the VET schools and institutions in the country. The limitations of the people of Kosovo to free movement, especially in European Union countries, as well as long procedures for Schengen visa issuances, including high costs of such visa applications for visa applicants has created serious barriers in opportunities to learn new skills and gain practical experiences for many VET training providers and schoolteachers. This is supported by the evidence that 75% of respondents find the knowledge of EU programs and tools in VET education very useful.

It was concluded by the participants that Kosova is with many tourists and less tourism. From this dimension it is evident that there is a need to institutionally explore new paths for sustainable tourism by creating travel opportunities with minimal impact and positive benefits for destinations and their communities. Simultaneously using ecotourism to educate tourists about nature and the environment, and travellers taking part in conservation and cultural activities.

VET providers are making efforts in enrolling students with greater school performance because for time being students that join such schools have moderate performance at their primary school. Mechanism to target good performing students and to enrol them at VET schools is of vital importance.

In addition, principles of VET schools consider that students sometimes don't have a clear understanding on why they have chosen certain profiles in school. This is a strong justification for recommendation in starting to promote VET school programs at the primary schools so that an awareness on tourism and sustainability could be built up ahead. In rural zones, where parents of students deal with agriculture and farming, this presents an opportunity to increase student's level of motivation to deal with tourism and sustainability in the future. Therefore, several actions are needed to unlock the full potential of tourism in Kosovo. Improving tourism statistics that are not accurate and do not correctly reflect the real situation. Having learned from developing countries how important it is to prioritise tourism and provide consideration to its potential, it would be required to promote tourism education and training systems on tourism, marketing and sustainability.

Annex 7: Total survey results

Frequencies per country per survey question.

ID	Country	Abbreviation	Answers Collected
1	Kosovo	XK	50
2	Bosnia and Herzegovina	BA	64
3	Albania	AL	65
Total	3	3	179

Sector	Education	Trade Unions	Business associations/providers in the field of tourism	Catering and hospitality	Other	Total
XK	47	1	1	0	1	50
BA	54	0	6	2	2	64
AL	61	0	0	0	4	65
Total	162	1	7	2	7	179

Familiar with sustainable tourism	Yes	No	Total
XK	26	24	50
BA	48	16	64
AL	52	13	65
Total	126	53	179

Job/Role	Adult trainer	Vocational Education and Training provider	Travel agency manager	Destination manager	Tour organizer	Travel consultant	Tour operator	Entrepreneur	Corporate Social Responsibility Manager	Office administration/supervisor	Accommodation/hospitality manager	Professional in the transportation industry	Professional in the Business Support Services (accountant, marketer, business)	Professional in the Food & beverage industry (serving)	Other	Total

													consultant, etc)	tourism)		
XK	4	31	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	5	47
BA	10	31	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	8	55
AL	2	39	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	11	56
Total	16	101	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	7	3	0	2	0	24	158

Age	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75+	Total
XK	4	7	15	23	1	0	50
BA	2	4	34	24	0	0	64
AL	2	10	26	27	0	0	65
Total	8	21	75	74	1	0	179

Gender	Male	Female	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
XK	22	27	0	1	50
BA	11	53	0	0	64
AL	15	50	0	0	65
Total	48	130	0	1	179

Q1/Make tourism in your sector more attractive	Provide innovative digital solutions	Safeguard cultural and natural heritage	Diversify the range of courses to cater various aspects of tourism	Establish strong partnerships with local tourism businesses	Focus more on sustainable tourism practices and environmental awareness	Increase practical exposure	Invite industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and professionals to deliver guest lectures and workshops	Offer language courses	Offer cultural sensitivity training	Other	Total
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XK	26	30	7	20	12	8	12	5	7	0	127
BA	12	40	19	31	33	10	15	11	8	0	179
AL	24	36	12	37	19	9	11	4	11	0	163
Total	62	106	38	88	64	27	38	20	26	0	469

Q2/Make vocational education in your sector more attractive	Continuous education of VET staff	Participation of VET staff to mobility activities	Participation of VET learners in mobility activities	Recognition of VET learners' competences	Promotion of youth employment, particularly for young women	Total
XK	35	25	32	14	22	128
BA	48	26	37	22	31	164
AL	43	38	40	10	37	168
Total	126	89	109	46	90	460

Q3/Relevant technical skills in your sector	Developing VET internationalization strategies (i.e. Work Based learning, mobilities)	Using quality assurance instruments (i.e. for the recognition of mobilities)	Budgeting, cost control, and financial analysis	Adaptability to new technologies and software applications, such as online travel platforms, property management systems, and customer relationship management (CRM) tools.	Other	Total
XK	41	27	22	30	0	120
BA	49	30	21	46	2	148
AL	47	33	26	50	0	156
Total	137	90	69	126	2	424

Q4/Relevant pedagogical skills in your sector	Instructional design	Integration of technology in teaching	Self-assessment/evaluation as a reflective process	Research skills	Other	Total
XK	13	46	26	37	0	122
BA	33	52	28	40	1	154
AL	16	56	41	44	0	157
Total	62	154	95	121	1	433

Q5/Relevant soft skills in your sector	Communication skills	Interpersonal skills	Adaptability	Time management	Problem-solving	Critical thinking	Cultural sensitivity	Teamwork	Customer service skills	Leadership skills	Other	Total
XK	37	13	4	21	14	14	3	25	5	5	0	141
BA	48	8	14	6	14	30	11	29	15	4	1	180
AL	54	17	14	15	17	20	5	20	7	12	0	181
Total	139	38	32	42	45	64	19	74	27	21	1	502

EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education

Q6/How beneficial do you find the knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education?	Not useful	Neutral	Useful	Very useful	Total
XK	0	1	10	39	50
BA	2	7	32	23	64
AL	0	2	12	51	65
Total	2	10	54	113	179

Q7/Do you have experience with international mobility of staff?	Yes	No	Total
XK	13	37	50
BA	10	54	64
AL	12	53	65
Total	35	144	179

Q7.2/If yes, please point out the type of mobility you had experience with:	Job shadowing (2 to 60 days) for teachers	Teaching or training assignments (2 to 365 days) for teachers	Courses and training (2 to 30 days, maximum 10 days of course fees per participant) for teachers	Other	Total
XK	2	3	8	0	5
BA	0	4	6	0	4
AL	4	7	0	1	11
Total	6	14	14	1	35

Q8/How beneficial do you find the knowledge of EU programmes and tools in the field of VET education?	Project proposal writing and submission	Finding partners for proposals	Practical issues related to the organization of the working/learning program	Logistics	Project reporting	Funding / co-funding	Interpersonal relations	Cultural differences	N/A	Total
XK	12	7	10	3	1	16	0	0	1	32
BA	17	7	10	1	3	16	6	3	1	35
AL	14	15	10	5	3	14	1	3	0	44
Total	43	29	30	9	7	46	7	6	2	179

Q9/Which of the following do you consider as benefits from international VET mobilities for a VET provider?	Boosted attractiveness of the organization/institution	Improved organisational image	Enriched organisational know-how	Enriched partner network	Access to innovative/new/practical teaching approaches	Boosted prospects for international cooperation	Boosted quality of the educational services provided	N/A	Total
XK	10	4	5	4	10	3	13	1	23
BA	3	5	9	5	16	9	16	1	22
AL	11	5	4	4	11	8	22	0	24
Total	24	14	18	13	37	20	51	2	179

Q10/Which of the following do you consider as benefits for	Improved career prospects	Boosted skills, knowledge and competence	Access to innovative/new w/ practical	Improved transversal skills	Boosted foreign language	Improved multicultural awareness	Widened personal and	Total
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participants/learners in international VET mobilities?		nces relevant to their current/future occupation	teaching approaches		competences	s and tolerance	professional horizons	
XK	8	22	9	3	2	0	6	39
BA	6	32	10	2	5	4	5	48
AL	7	30	6	1	5	2	14	43
Total	21	84	25	6	12	6	25	179

Q11/Are you aware of EU instruments for their cognition and validation of competences acquired in an international mobility (i.e. ECVET process)?	Yes	No	Total
XK	17	33	50
BA	11	53	64
AL	14	51	65
Total	42	137	179

Q11.2/If applicable, do you need support in defining and implementing them?	Yes	No	Total
XK	23	27	50
BA	21	43	64
AL	36	29	65
Total	80	99	179

Q12/Would you be interested in attending a free training course on the topic of Quality in Mobility and Recognition of Learning Outcomes?	Yes	No	N/A	Total
XK	40	3	7	43
BA	46	9	9	55
AL	50	8	7	58
Total	136	20	23	179

Q12.2/If yes, specify why:	I want to learn something new	I want to improve my existing knowledge	It is free of charge	I have spare time	Total
XK	13	23	3	1	36
BA	13	31	1	0	44
AL	23	22	2	2	45
Total	49	76	6	3	134

Q13/Are you aware of any existing VET initiatives in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing in your country?	Yes	No	Total
XK	3	47	50
BA	3	61	64
AL	8	57	65
Total	14	165	179