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Roadmap for the development of occupational standards in BiH



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A Road Map for Development of Occupational Standards for all Occupations

The team of people who were involved in the development of this roadmap were:

Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education in BiH – VET Department			
1	Agency for pre-primary, primary and secondary education in BiH – VET department	Slavica Ivošević	Brace Potkonjaka 2, Banja Luka Tel: 051 430 710 Fax: 051 430 711 slavica.ivošević@gmail.com
2	Agency for pre-primary, primary and secondary education in BiH – VET department	Dušan Sarajlić	Brace Potkonjaka 2, Banja Luka Tel: 051 430 710 Fax: 051 430 711 sarajlicdusko@gmail.com
Chambers of Commerce			
3	Chamber of commerce Brčko District BiH	Šaćir Rahman	Cvijete Zuzorić bb, Distrikt
4	Chamber of commerce RS	Jovanka Salatić	Đure Daničića ½, Banja Luka
Pedagogical Institutes			
5	Pedagogical Institute Bihać	Senad Haurdić	Alije Đerzeleza bb, Bihać Tel: 037 223 441 037 / 222 770 (vlada) 061/370-036 senad.h@live.com
6	Pedagogical Institute RS	Zoran Bogdanović	Miloša Obilića 39, Banja Luka Tel: 051 430 110 z.bogdanovic@rpz-rs.org
7	Pedagogical Institute Sarajevo	Alija Grabovica	Maršala Tita 54/3, Sarajevo Tel: 033 220 967 Fax: 033 214 890
8	Institute for School Affairs Mostar	Boris Krešić	Kralja Zvonimira 14, Mostar Fax: 036 334 255 Fax: 036 316 655
9	Pedagogical Institute Bihać	Ejub Alagić	Alije Đerzeleza bb, Bihać Tel: 037 223 441 037 / 222 770 (vlada)
10	Pedagogical Institute Tuzla	Šaćir Isaković	Bosne Srebrene 119, Tuzla Tel: 035 320 220 Mobitel: 061 150 813
11	Pedagogical Institute Tuzla	Šaćir Isaković	Bosne Srebrene 119, Tuzla Tel: 035 320 220 Mobitel: 061 150 813 Fax: 035 280 755
12	Pedagogical Institute Goražde	Ermin Dragolj	Višegradska 2a, Goražde Tel: 038 221 052 Fax: 038 220 934
13	Pedagogical Institute Brčko District	Sead Pašić	Bulevar Mira 1 049 / 217 – 804 049 / 216 - 894 049 214 503 Mobitel: 061 650 590
14	Government of Brčko district- Education department	Slavoljub Bašić	Bulevar Mira 1 049 / 217 – 804 049 214 503

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1. Introduction

This document is a follow up of the activities relating to the development of occupational standards, delivered by the 'EU support to vocational education and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina IV' (EU VET 4) project, from the development of the methodology for collecting data about occupations to the actual development of occupational standards and consequently the production of 'Handbook: Development of occupational standards'.

2. Objective

To indicate the steps to be taken and the timeframe towards a fully developed system of occupational standards development, by working with representatives from the Ministries of Education in the Cantons, RS and Brčko District, Pedagogical Institutes, the VET Department of the Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, and the Chambers of Commerce.

3. Findings

3.1 Results of the EU VET 4 project regarding the development of occupational standards

The project organised its activities involving working groups representing relevant ministries, the VET Department, pedagogical institutes, chambers of commerce, school directors and teachers from VET and technical schools. These groups discussed which methodology should be applied for the collection of data regarding the occupations and selected the interview method that was both convenient and cost effective.

Representatives from pedagogical institutes, the VET Department, the Ministry of Civil Affairs in BiH (MoCA), Chambers of Commerce, project mentors, and teachers from VET and technical schools were trained in the whole range of activities – from conducting interviews to processing the collected data, to design of occupational standards.

Thirty one teachers were active in the interviewing process – they conducted 85 interviews, involving a total of 62 companies. The teachers conducting the interviews contacted the companies, made appointments and sent letters with information about the purpose of the interview and general information on the overall process.

Representatives from the MoCA, pedagogical institutes, the VET Department, chambers of commerce, project mentors, and VET and technical school teachers were all active in processing the collected data and then producing the occupational standards.

Ten occupational standards were developed for Occupational Family number one, *Agriculture and Food Processing*, which were then used as a basis for the revision of curricula in the following occupations:

3 year: butcher, baker, farmer, florist, food-processing operator, milk processor, fruit grower-vine grower-wine producer

4 year: agricultural technician, veterinarian technician, food processing technician

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All the activities were positively received and provided a solid experience for future activities regarding the development of occupational standards for other occupations.

All 10 developed occupational standards and revised curricula are available from the VET Department.

Within vocational education, occupational standards represent defined demand identified by employers, expert and professional organisation, and educational bodies.

The methodology for the development of occupational standards can be found in the document 'Handbook: Development of occupational standards', but a short overview of the procedures is as follows:

- 1) The need for development of new occupational standards or updating of existing occupational standards is defined
- 2) The interviewers are selected and training in interviewing techniques is organised and carried out
- 3) A list of companies to be interviewed is made
- 4) Appointments with companies are made
- 5) Interviews are conducted
- 6) The results of the interviews are processed
- 7) The documents containing the occupational standards are produced
- 8) A verification of the occupational standards is made by sending the developed draft occupational standards to other companies within the same occupation and/or to Chambers of Commerce or Chambers of Crafts and Ministries of Education

3.2 Future perspectives

The initiative to develop new occupational standards or update the existing ones can be taken by the VET Department, pedagogical institutes, educational authorities, educational institutes, social partners, etc.

The occupational standards represent the criteria which an individual must satisfy in order to be able to perform a particular job.

At the same time the occupational standards can be used as the basis for development of new curricula or revision of the existing ones

The occupational standards and consequently the updating of the curricula strengthen the relevance of VET in the sense that they ensure that the competences which the learners achieve are what are required on the labour market.

3.3 Partners to be involved

It is possible to identify a larger number of social partners, such as:

- Trade unions
- Chambers of Commerce

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- Employers Association
- Chamber of Crafts
- Pedagogical institutes
- State, entity, cantonal and municipal authorities
- Agencies for local and regional development
- Centres for development of small and medium-size enterprises
- Non-governmental organisations

Successful cooperation between the world of work and the world of education is primarily based on development of institutional partner networks and by establishing appropriate social dialogue. The law relating to VET already creates the basis for cooperation between the institutional partners.

Partnership represents a specific development process with emphasis on harmonisation of, for example, the supply of education compared to the demand on the labour market and forming a broad basis for resolving structural problems in labour market and education area.

As the development of occupational standards requires a good dialogue and cooperation between the partners on the labour market and the educational institution partners – these activities could create the basis for establishing more permanent mechanisms for the development of occupational standards, leading to the strengthening of dialogue between partners.

4. Recommendations

- The VET Department develops an action plan in which it indicates who and when to contact relevant ministries to ask for proposals for the next occupational family to be revised and prepares, by these contacts, the set up for development activities. By discussing the proposals, the VET Department also establishes agreements with ministries regarding the financing of the activities.
- Evaluation of which occupational families need to be revised and therefore selection of occupations for which occupational standards have to be developed should be started
- Selection of teachers/people has to be according to their previously established competence of vocational knowledge and skills that is relevant for the occupational family
- Training in interviewing techniques
- Companies should be contacted and informed about the aim of the interview before being interviewed
- Interviews should be carried out, and after a first grouping of the results of the interview, the data should be sent to the interviewed companies for feedback in order to check if results of the interviews contain any mistakes or misunderstandings
- The collected data should be processed and occupational standards should be developed
- The developed occupational standards should be sent to other companies not being interviewed, but within the same occupation, for verification

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- A plan for revision of curricula within the occupational family, based on the occupational standards, should be developed and the revision of the curricula should take place.
- The VET Department in cooperation with pedagogical institutes, Ministries of Education, and VET and technical schools should be involved in the development/updating of occupational standards and development/updating of the agreed modular curricula.
- The developed occupational standards and the new or revised curricula should be sent to relevant ministries for approval
- Based on experiences with the development of occupational standards, the VET Department should describe the mechanisms on how social partners are to be included in the process
- The VET Department should establish contact with employment services to obtain information from their monitoring and analysis of the labour market, employment and trends
- The VET Department should continue to contact ministries of education to plan which occupational families should be revised during the following 3 years
- The VET Department should work on strengthening the relationship between the partners from the labour market and from the education sector by the means of the Tripartite Advisory Councils which are composed by representatives of employers, trade unions and competent education authorities. These councils are established at the level of Entities, Cantons and Brcko District of BiH – as described in the Framework law on VET in BiH.

5. Action Plan

The action plan is divided into two parts: one short term timeframe and one long term timeframe.

Short term plan:

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Development of an action plan including the preparation of decisions on the next occupational families to be revised and occupational standards to be developed	Action plan is developed and agreements are made with ministries of education about the development activities and the financing of the activities	VET Department, pedagogical institutes, Institute for school affairs, and ministries of education	Summer 2013
Evaluation of the need for revision of curricula and development of occupational standards	Information on which occupational standards have to be developed.	VET Department, pedagogical institutes and the Institute for school affairs	Summer 2013
Selection of teachers/persons to be trained in interviewing techniques	Information on which schools to involve and the number of teachers/people to be trained	VET Department, pedagogical institutes and the Institute for school affairs	Summer 2013
Contact companies and	Data are collected	The involved VET	Summer

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Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
conduct interviews		and technical schools and the VET Department	2013
Processing of data and the development of occupational standards	Occupational standards are developed	The involved VET and technical schools, VET Department, pedagogical institutes, the Institute for school affairs and representatives from the labour market	Summer 2013
Development of a plan for the revision of curricula within the occupational family, based on the occupational standards. Revision of the curricula is carried out	Revised curricula within the occupational family	The involved VET and technical schools, VET Department, pedagogical institutes and representatives from the labour market	End of 2013
Development of a description of the mechanisms on how social partners are included in the process	A description of the mechanisms of inclusion of the social partners in the process of development of occupational standards and curricula.	The VET Department	Summer 2014

Long term plan:

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Decision on the next occupational families to be revised and occupational standards to be developed, based on the needs of the labour market	Agreements are made with all ministries of education and labour regarding the development activities	VET Department	2014–2016
In BiH representatives of School Boards are elected from schools' employees, founders of schools and parents. Additionally, in the Republic of Srpska are also elected representative of local community in School Boards	School boards with representatives from companies and the associations of employers are providing a stronger link from the VET and technical schools to the local labour market and	VET Department and the founder of the VET and technical schools	2014–2016

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Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
and in cantons/ županija representative from those cantons/županije u BiH." The Framework law in the article 16 proposes that besides schools employees, school founders, parents, representatives of local communities are elected also representatives of labour market. To support realisation of article 16, an information campaign is carried out	vice versa		
Strengthening the relationship with the Tripartite Advisory Councils	Improved relationship between the labour market and the education sector by the means of Tripartite Advisory Councils	The VET Department and ministries of education	2016
Establishment of a continuous contact with the employment services to obtain information from their monitoring and analysis of labour market, employment and trends	Ongoing information about the development and trends in employment and consequently the need for education	The VET Department	2014-2016

6. Summary

This document provides brief background information on the development of the first occupational standards (in the area of VET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, lists and recommendations for the short term and long term establishment of mechanisms for the development of occupational standards and an action plan for continuing the process of developing occupational standards.

