

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA WORKFORCE AND HIGHER ACCESS TO MARKETS ACTIVITY (WHAM)

Goal/Purpose

Bosnia is home to a growing number of small and medium enterprises that are adopting international standards to supply sophisticated EU customers, yet the economy is still not generating enough jobs. USAID's Workforce and Higher Access to Markets Activity is a new three-year program that aims to stimulate job creation by advancing Bosnia's trade integration with and expansion into European Union and regional markets.

The activity will accomplish this primarily via a cost-share grant program with SMEs.

Interventions

The activity will improve the capacity of high-growth, exporting, and export-ready small and medium enterprises from wood, metal and textile sector via grants focused on three intervention areas:

- **Improve workforce in targeted sectors** by developing partnerships with public and private sector to share the cost of recruiting or retraining a labor force with adequate skills. This may include assistance to relevant secondary schools in equipping school cabinets with adequate equipment;
- **Increase market access** by supporting companies in targeted sectors to identify and access new customers and markets. This may include supporting private and public-sector initiatives to help companies attend major regional and international trade fairs; and,
- **Improve product quality and use of new technology related to quality management and certification** by supporting companies in targeted sectors to introduce quality management systems, technology upgrades and necessary product/service certification in demand by target markets (EU standards and/or other relevant quality standards).

This activity aims to **increase exports by 30 percent** for assisted enterprises and create **1,545 new jobs**, of which half are for youth and 20 percent are for women.

The activity is awarded through the Volunteers for Economic Growth alliance and implemented by IESC in partnership with ENOVA.

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