



**Green and Digital Skills in the Western Balkans: Labor Market Demands and VET
Needs Related to These Skills**

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Preliminary Study Summary

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Western Balkans plays an important role for addressing the young unemployment and bridging the gap between the education system and the labour demands. Yet, the region still faces problems with an obsolete curriculum, inadequate infrastructure cooperation with businesses, and a new teaching methodology. All these limitations prevent them from developing a workforce ready to take up the challenges of a rapidly changing economy.

On that account, Kosovo is taking steps to integrate the GreenComp and DigComp frameworks, with green skills planned to be embedded in secondary school curricula. Still, formal adoption and implementation lag behind. Meanwhile, the demand for digital skills is high, yet Kosovo lacks a comprehensive digital skills policy. Meanwhile, Bosnia and Herzegovina has formulated strategic documents such as the “2019–2030 Priorities” and references digital competencies in the VET Law, but these remain fragmented and insufficiently implemented. Moreover, VET education in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates that the education sector faces challenges that constrain the development of the required and adequate labour demand. Having a discrepancy between the market labour and competent labour force challenges the company’s productivity and the growth of the economy within two countries and in the whole region of the Western Balkans.

By addressing these deficiencies and investing in capacity building for VET education, this research employed a mixed-method approach combining semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, desk research, and survey. This research assesses the development and integration of green and digital skills into the systems of VET in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, drawing on data from the OECD, ETF, Ministries of Education, National Strategies, European Commission, survey responses, focus groups, and interviews. Both countries show the growing importance being attached to aligning their education systems with the evolving needs of the labour market, particularly concerning green and digital transitions. However, progress continues to be uneven and often delayed due to systemic flaws, lack of policy frameworks, outdated curricula and lack of basic information on green skills.

Preliminary Key Findings

Green Skills: Each country lacks a formal national framework for green skills, whereas teachers observe a complete lack of training and materials; employers have confirmed



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that there is almost no systematic inclusion of green skills in curricula. The only other aspect that sets Kosovo a little ahead in this field is its active work towards the design and development of its own guidelines.

Digital Skills: Kosovo is the leader when it comes to the integration of digital skills at schools; 67% of students are using digital tools on a weekly basis. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, digital tools are widely used, still teacher capacity and infrastructure remain the major challenges.

Student Awareness: Some 50% of students from both countries express interest in developing their green and digital skills. However, their knowledge of green skills remains lower than that of digital skills.

Confidence in Employability: Kosovar students are more confident (43.6%) that what they learn corresponds to labour market needs; on the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina students are less certain.

Teacher Perspectives (Focus Groups): In Kosovo, teachers call for Curriculum reform, integration of both green and digital skills in all the teaching subjects, infrastructure development particularly in rural areas, and international cooperation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, they want more industry involvement, updated tools for teaching, and fewer bureaucratic hurdles.

Employer Perspectives: Employers agree that VET students in Kosovo are to some extent prepared for real work environments while in Bosnia and Herzegovina less. They advocate for dual systems, curriculum modernization, and direct participation in shaping VET programs.

Common Barriers: Outdated programs, weak institutional-industry links, a lack of teacher training, and low student motivation hinder skills development across both countries.