Eastern Europe
Regional Report 2013
Employment and income open up pathways out of poverty and into a future with real opportunities.

Sustainable growth, driven by an innovative private sector, adding value to underdeveloped regions and engaging disadvantaged populations as active market participants is the foundation of Swisscontact’s project work, which focuses on four core areas:

- **Vocational training**: facilitating access to the labour market and creates the basis for employment and income
- **SME promotion**: supporting local entrepreneurship and aims to strengthen competitiveness
- **Financial services**: facilitating access to local financial services such as credit, savings, leasing, and insurance products
- **Resource efficiency**: promoting efficient resource use through energy- and material-efficient production methods as well as measures to promote clean air and sustainable waste management

In this way Swisscontact creates the appropriate conditions for entrepreneurship. These are necessary for a competitive private sector devoted to principles of social justice and environmental sustainability, serving as foundation pillars of all development.

Swisscontact was established in 1959 as an independent organisation by prominent individuals from the worlds of commerce and science in Switzerland. It is exclusively involved in international cooperation and has carried out its own and mandated projects since 1961, maintaining close ties with the private sector since its foundation. The organisation is based in Zurich and in 2013, Swisscontact was active in 27 countries with a workforce of over 800 people.
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Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to share with you the good news of our intention to further strengthen Swisscontact’s presence in the Western Balkans.

We have started a new programme supporting Private Sector Employment in Kosovo, whilst we continue with the very appealing Coaching for Employment approach in Albania, reinforcing our efforts for social inclusion in the country.

Our office in Tirana is also implementing the final phase of our successful AlbVET Project in Albania, where participants at various levels have benefited from the support offered to reform the Vocational Education and Training system in the country.
This year we are increasing the portfolio of the PPSE Project in Kosovo, with new areas of intervention in the health sector and the economic empowerment of women.

We have continued to maintain our excellence in implementation, cooperation with our partners and coordination of complex interventions, as well as all aspects of the project management cycle.

Throughout the year, Swisscontact has played a very active role in VET policy through projects in the Western Balkans. After 20 years of experience in the region, we are proud to acknowledge our comfortable position of being the lead actor in the VET sector in Albania and Kosovo.

Our record, reputation, network and presence are stronger than ever in these countries. This makes us confident in our efforts to expand our portfolio and presence in the Western Balkans.

The region is proving extremely welcoming to further support and Swisscontact is already looking at opportunities to serve this need, using our strengths and close ties with all actors and partners in the Western Balkans.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, sponsors and supporters for the excellent collaborations that made 2013 such an insightful year for us. While we are satisfied with the developments, we still have very ambitious work and planning ahead of us.

Further expansion in the region, as well as continued development of the Swisscontact portfolio, new partnerships and areas of interventions, combined with consolidation of our innovative approaches, will enable us to better leverage our efforts. These efforts will also increase the impact we have on the lives of our participants and beneficiaries, which remains our goal for the coming year.

We look forward to a brand new start with our partners and clients in 2014, building on the work and accomplishments we have shared, not only in 2013, but in our entire 20 years of experience in the Western Balkans.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report and learning more about our work in the region.

Walter Horn
Director, Eastern Europe
1,200 students are enrolled in all levels at the thermo-hydraulic system fitting profile, where Swisscontact supports 10 schools throughout the country with its Project Based Learning approach, leading to a better qualified labour force in Albania.

90 students are currently enjoying the benefits of the same approach through the support offered to the newly created IT for practitioners profile at the post-secondary level. Albanian and Swiss students of the IT profile were brought together for a week, resulting in a functional webpage for the IT course, provided in cooperation between a university and vocational schools. This brand new form of cooperation in Albania was introduced by Swisscontact.

300 students from 23 vocational schools participated in skills competitions in 5 technical profiles - a Swisscontact initiative supported by the private sector in Albania.

65 teachers from three different profiles were trained. Training involved capacity development for teachers and instructors in thermo-hydraulic system-fitting, solar technology, IT for practitioners and IT teachers from 17 vocational schools. The latest was done in cooperation with an Austrian IT school in Albania.

400 young individuals were assisted in their preparations to enter the labour market with newly acquired skills through Coaching for Employment project.

24 trainers from 12 NGO partners and Labour Offices were trained by Swisscontact partner institutions to guide participants from vulnerable groups in their efforts to enter the labour market.

During 50 training days spread over 12 blocks, these trainers acquired the skills to train and guide participants from vulnerable groups to become self-employed.
100 innovative business ideas are being developed to enable the participants of the Coaching for Employment Project to successfully enter the labour market.

There was a 100% increase in student enrolment in the 2012/13 agribusiness and food technology classes, which were fully booked after Swisscontact provided support to the VES.

70% of technical and economic profile students were placed in internship roles in suitable companies.

22 teachers have been trained in a ToT programme as master trainers in Kosovo. They are used to train their peers in their respective profiles.

60% of students in the supported profiles of thermo-hydraulics, auto mechanics and economic-administration were employed by the end of their studies, compared to only 10% in 2008.
Swisscontact Working Areas within Eastern Europe

**Albania (Regions and towns)**
- Tirana
- Durrës
- Elbasan
- Lushnje
- Fier
- Vlorë

**Gjirokastër**

**Sarandë**

**Korçë**

**Berat**

**Lezhë**

**Shkodër**

**Kosovo (Regions and towns)**
- Prishtinë
- Prizren
- Gjakovë
- Gjilan
- Mitrovicë

**Kamenicë**

**Viti**

**Kaçanik**

**Suharekë**

**Pejë**
Graduate from the C4E coaching cycle: clothes vendor in Albania
AlbVET Project, Albania

The cornerstone of continuous reform

The SDC-funded AlbVET Project promotes private sector participation and inter-institutional cooperation. AlbVET started in July 2007 and will run until 30 June 2014.

The main objective of this project is to support the formal education system through reforming an entire occupational area, introducing a new type of post-secondary level course and offering teacher’s training in IT for VET schools. Moreover, it promotes private sector participation for VET in a non-formal system. Successful models in supported Private Training Providers were registered last year in four towns: Berat, Lushnje, Durrës and Saranda. The project contributes to making VET an issue of public interest and influences the formal system reform at policy level.

The support in Thermo-Hydraulic System Fitting remains the flagship of the project. Learning in this occupational area, which includes plumbing, air-conditioning and heating, is now based on the new approach called “project-based learning”. The support strategy includes curriculum development, teacher and instructor training, development of learning materials for the 12 learning projects, training infrastructure and development of organisational and regulatory frameworks.

Each learning project lasts between one and two months. For implementation, the AlbVET Project cooperates with all 10 vocational schools across the country that has this profile in their portfolio. Advanced specialisations in solar technology are concentrated on four more advanced centres of competence. Students from other schools rotate to those centres for the advanced learning projects.

The project promotes private sector participation through internships for students in the 3rd year of the thermo-hydraulic profile, private sector participation in examination panels, support to a private initiative for a first national skills competition, and informal apprenticeship schemes called Partnerships for Learning.
Employable students in a real-life project
Outcomes 2013

- 250 Students completed their 4-year training cycle in thermo-hydraulics with final examinations.

- 30 Students completed the first pilot cycle of the 2-year post-secondary programme for IT practitioners.

- About 300 students from 23 vocational schools participated in skills competitions in five technical profiles.

- One of the highlights of the project year was a joint project week, where Swiss learners from the dual system and Albanian students from the pilot course for IT practitioners were brought together.

- A major project input consisted of a capacity development programme designed for teachers and instructors in solar technology from four centres of competence; IT teachers from 17 vocational schools; and practice learning trainers in a pilot course for IT practitioners. This programme was implemented in cooperation with international experts - a Swiss partner institution and an Austrian IT school in Albania.

Ervin Veizaj, student of thermo hydraulic with a fellow student
We have a high number of students who get employed after their internships. Companies are so pleased with their performance that they decide to keep these students in their staff. It’s all part of the package in the Project-Based Learning programme that Swisscontact applies in our school.

Luciana Muca, Vocational School in Lushnja
Coaching for Employment (C4E), Albania

Enabling disadvantaged groups to enter the labour market

Young participant of the C4E Programme Albania
Coaching for Employment is a new concept and approach developed by Swisscontact. Supported by the Medicor Foundation and SDC, this project has a duration of 2 years and was started in 2012.

During a period of at least 12 months, coaches accompany young participants from communities on their path toward employment and self-employment. On this path, participants explore the world of work, participate in short- and long-term internships, work on individual development plans and attend vocational courses. They also gain social and methodological skills and develop their self-competence.

The modular training of trainers (ToT) is provided by the University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne. The University has recognised the ToT with a CAS-Certificate of Advanced Studies. 22 coaches from both the pilot and current phase each underwent an individual performance assessment. One of the training blocks was held at the premises of University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne (HSLU), also offering the opportunity to learn from the Swiss experience in services related to labour market insertion and to visit different centres that provide such services. In May/June 2013, the project organised a study visit for a team of 19 Professors from the University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne with the objective of exploring the political, economic, and social transition in Albania.
Outcomes 2013

• 400 Participants - young individuals from vulnerable groups - and 24 new coaches from 12 implementing partners participated in the training of trainers.

• National Employment Service became a partner for implementation through the participation of three regional labour offices.

• This provided the impetus to institutionalise the coaching approach. Under a new service model, the National Employment Service attempts to adapt coaching for employment as an approach to working with vulnerable groups.

• Within the framework of the Coaching for Employment Project, a new initiative in spurring employment opportunities - specifically for Albanian vulnerable groups - was to develop a list of 100 innovative business ideas for employment generation or offer the possibility of upgrading existing businesses' abilities to employ more people.
Together with 14 other coaches from across the country, we've received very professional training by University of Lucerne staff. With the acquired skills, we go back to our NGOs and accompany 10 participants from disadvantaged groups to gain vocational and life skills.

Daklea Kalaja, trained coach from ADRF, a local NGO in Tirana
The goal of the project is to attain large-scale sustainable impact on employment for young women and men through improved private sector competitiveness.

The main national partner is the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The programme will apply the Markets for the Poor (M4P) approach, using practical sector analysis, which includes: sector problems, underlying causes, related services and their weaknesses, actors, and proposed interventions.

The programme concentrates on three initial sectors: food processing, tourism, and private healthcare.

Work will be accomplished through a combination of analysis and pilot programmes for sector comprehension and the identification and vetting of future facilitation partners. Priority is given to the food processing and tourism sectors, with the private healthcare sector being analysed after expected reforms in January 2014.

PPSE is offering support in three sectors crucial to the country’s economy: food processing, tourism and health. The programme is financed by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by a consortium of Swisscontact, Riinvest Institute, and PEM Consult. The project will run from 2013 – 2017.
2013 Outcomes

During the first three months of the programme, main outputs included the setting-up of team, office and financial administration; annual planning for the inception phase; a workshop to familiarise the team with the general M4P approach; and close guidance in carrying out a market sector analysis and designing a strategy document for the tourism and food processing sectors. Expected outcomes will have a positive effect on:

• Sector competitiveness
• Private sector development governance
• Women's economic empowerment
The Vocational Education System Programme (VES) in Kosovo (2004 – 2013) focuses on developing market-oriented trades and enabling students to access practical experience in 11 technical and economic partner schools across Kosovo. This project is funded by SDC.

The VES Project has contributed crucial elements to the overall VET reform in Kosovo. Project support was directed to 11 schools and 6,700 students in technical profiles. It further supported the agricultural school in Pristina to become a nationally recognised education and training centre for agribusiness.

Moreover, it supported relevant institutions in enhancing their capacities in steering the implementation of strategies in selected policy areas, such as e-learning, decentralised funding and financial management.

Results in terms of employability are highly encouraging; achievements exceeded all expectations. Internship and job shadowing programmes initiated and supported by VES enhanced the link between schools and the private sector.

Due to initiatives and support by the VES Project, ICT is recognised as an important element in VET and pre-university education in general. VES supported the development of the 2010-2015 e-learning strategy, integrated into the 2011-2016 Kosovo Education Strategic Plan.

The VES Project support laid the necessary groundwork for establishing the path to essential future developments.
2013 Outcomes

- Concepts for adult courses are now available and the school is ready to offer trainings for adults. Some pilot training has been conducted on a limited basis within the project.

- The project provided key infrastructure elements for a future Centre for Agribusiness Learning (greenhouse, training kitchen, renovated cafeteria, and mobile IT lab). Hence, infrastructure for practice learning is available in key areas; proper utilisation and maintenance is however still a challenge.

- A framework for planning further developments consisting of an approved road map, a school development plan and a system of operational planning is in place. School management has been trained to work with the system.

- Links to private sector and similar projects in the area are at least partially established.
## Eastern Europe Project Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Partners &amp; donors</th>
<th>Annual Volume</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Results to date</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access to Skills Development, Vocational Education and Training</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>AlbVET – Support to VET reform</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>CHF 1,064,788</td>
<td>2007 - 2014</td>
<td>1,200 students from 10 schools in one occupational area acquiring new skills; 70 teachers trained and accredited; new educational level introduced – post-secondary in IT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Education Support – VES</strong></td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>CHF 470,092</td>
<td>2004 - 2013</td>
<td>Centre of competence fully functional in Prishtina: 475 teachers trained; 6,700 students benefited from training in the last phase only.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Private sector development and labour market access</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE)</td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>CHF 268,627</td>
<td>2013 - 2017</td>
<td>Currently in the inception phase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaching for Employment (C4E)</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Medicor Foundation</td>
<td>CHF 269,399</td>
<td>2012 - 2014</td>
<td>24 coaches trained; 400 youth from disadvantaged groups received assistance to acquire skills for labour market entry; approach institutionalised by the Albanian National Employment Service.</td>
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# Team Eastern Europe

**Walter Horn**  
Regional Director

**Edlira Gjoni**  
Regional Advisor

## AlbVET, Albania

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jäger Matthias</td>
<td>Country Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacharian Ana</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<td>Konini Maksim</td>
<td>Component Coordinator</td>
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<td>Aliko Ilir</td>
<td>Component Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sallaku Brikena</td>
<td>Financial Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neza Fatos</td>
<td>Logistic support</td>
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## Coaching for Employment, Albania

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Haxhiaj Silvana</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rustemi Kleidor</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
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## VES, Kosovo

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diana Bardhi</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vjollca Krasniqi</td>
<td>Component Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nefertita Bardhi</td>
<td>Component Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argjend Osmani</td>
<td>Component Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afrim Kamishi</td>
<td>Component Coordinator, SEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agim Malazogu</td>
<td>Logistic Support</td>
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## PPSE, Kosovo

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sigrid Meyer</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisnik Reçiça</td>
<td>Deputy Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alida Muaxhiri</td>
<td>Market Sector Facilitator, Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albana Gashi</td>
<td>Monitoring and Results Management Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agim Malazogu</td>
<td>Driver and Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blerina Batusha</td>
<td>Market Sector Facilitator, Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edona Kurtolli</td>
<td>Communications Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisa Roth</td>
<td>Monitoring and Results Management Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faton Nagavci</td>
<td>Market Sector Facilitator, Food Processing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fisnik Bajrami</td>
<td>Market Sector Facilitator, Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasa Elezovic</td>
<td>Minority Facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sebiha Jaka</td>
<td>Finance and Admin</td>
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We Create Opportunities

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Swiss NPO Code: The structure and management of Swisscontact conforms to the Corporate Governance Regulations for Non-Profit Organisations in Switzerland (Swiss NPO Code), issued by the presidents of large relief organisations. An audit conducted on behalf of this organisation showed that Swisscontact adheres to principles of the Swiss NPO Code.

ZEWO Seal of approval: Swisscontact was awarded the Seal of Approval from ZEWO. It is awarded to non-profit organisations for the conscientious handling of money entrusted to them, proving that donations are allocated appropriately, efficiently, and effectively. In addition, it stands for transparent and trustworthy organisations with functioning control structures that uphold ethics in the procurement of funds and communication. Swisscontact is regularly audited for compliance with these criteria. (Source: ZEWO)

Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS): Swisscontact has been awarded the Certificate of the International Inspection Agency Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) within the NGO Benchmarking Programme.

March 2014