

# Our impact 2023/24

Developing skilled, productive and inclusive workforces to help drive social and economic growth

This report showcases the results of our collaborations with industry, development banks and government agencies. Through these partnerships, we've developed innovative workforce development solutions to tackle critical global challenges and drive meaningful change.



Over 1650 people surveyed to inform targeted skills strategies



Over 5,300 people's skills enhanced, empowering their futures



Over 1,200 businesses supported, advancing workforce potential



Over 110 trainers trained, building capability & capacity for sustainable impact



We are proud to have been highly commended in the *Made in the UK, Sold to the World* awards and recognised as an Export Champion by the Department for Business & Trade, in recognition of our global impact and reach.



# Driving insights & intelligence to inform future workforce strategies

Through data-driven labour market intelligence, we've enabled informed decision-making at organisational, sectoral and regional levels, shaping evidence-based workforce strategies.

## Skills development strategy for the tourism industry in Belize

We developed a comprehensive strategy on behalf of the Inter-American Development Bank to transition Belize's tourism sector to eco-tourism, informed by labour market research. This included identifying skills gaps and creating a detailed **roadmap for the sector's transition to upskill the workforce** to meet eco-tourism demands. By engaging local communities, the strategy promotes sustainable growth and ensures balanced economic benefits, ultimately strengthening the workforce and improving livelihoods.



## Local economic assessment and vulnerability mapping analysis in Jordan

The local economic assessment we conducted in Jordan on behalf of Enabel identified **13 high-potential sectors** for employment and entrepreneurship, focusing on vulnerable groups including youth, women and Syrian refugees. The study highlighted skills gaps and recommended targeted interventions such as training programmes, work placements and entrepreneurship support. This intelligence has provided a foundation for addressing local economic needs and improving employment opportunities for marginalised groups.

## Labour market intelligence for the North East visitor economy

Amidst Destination North East England's ambitions to double the size of the visitor economy over the next 10 years, we provided in-depth labour market research to provide intelligence to better understand the complex skills issues and emerging workforce challenges. Our research represented the views of **180 businesses in the region, encompassing a workforce of 25,000 employees** and provided a roadmap for tackling these challenges through strategic initiatives and collaborative efforts to support sustainable growth.



# Driving industry-led approaches to workforce development

We have helped strengthen a sectoral approach to skills development, aligning training with industry needs and creating demand-driven systems that build strong talent pipelines for the future workforce.

## Transforming skills development through public-private partnerships in Pakistan

Our partnership with the British Council established a sustainable Industry Advisory Task Group in Pakistan's food and beverage sector, strengthening collaboration between industry and education. Through stakeholder engagement, a UK study visit and labour market intelligence, we've identified key workforce needs and outlined practical solutions to develop the skills required, setting a **new standard for public-private collaboration**.



## Sector-led collaboration for hospitality and tourism in Northern Ireland



The Hospitality and Tourism Skills Network has driven progress in addressing workforce challenges in the sector in Northern Ireland. Recognised as a **best practice approach to sector collaboration** in skills development, it has influenced government policies, identified emerging skills needs and elevated the sector's profile driving positive change in workforce attraction, retention and development.

## Strengthening sector skills councils in Serbia

Our assessment of sector skills councils (SSC) in Serbia engaged over **170 employers and 166 stakeholders across 19 sectors** to deliver actionable recommendations that are now being piloted in the railway sector's SSC. This led to the Office for Dual Education and NQF adopting a new, more efficient SSC model, better aligning education and industry needs.



*People 1st International's expertise in setting up and operating SSCs greatly contributed to the ambitious task of redesigning the SSC model in Serbia. Following this successful project, we expect to see the model applied across the SSCs in the country and hope to further partner with People 1st International to support necessary legal reforms for its full implementation."*

- Dragana Marjanovic, Economic Inclusion Specialist, European Bank for Reconstruction & Development

# Spotlight: Revisiting the Philippines' Sector Skills Council for Fruits and Vegetable Processing



In 2021, through an initiative in the Philippines to strengthen workforce development we supported the newly formed SSC for Fruits and Vegetable Processing. Our role was to provide the SSC with foundational support to establish its mission, vision and sustainability plan, as well as equipping members with essential skills through capacity-building programmes. We provided technical insights from international best practices and guided the SSC in conducting labour market intelligence to address workforce needs.

This year, we reconnected with the SSC to learn about their progress. What we found was a journey of growth and resilience, driven by the training and support provided. Since its formation, the SSC has **grown into a proactive body for skills development and industry collaboration**. Members have expanded their influence from local to national levels, organising trade fairs and forums while strengthening ties with schools and industry stakeholders. The SSC has also implemented ongoing capacity-building programmes, such as a train the trainer initiative, to support continued professional development in the sector. Critically, stronger employer collaboration has been established, aligning training efforts with industry needs and driving collective action to address workforce challenges.

## Key achievements



Increased member participation and **national-level engagement** in policy and advocacy efforts



Completion of a **comprehensive labour market intelligence** study to better understand workforce needs



Progress toward **government recognition** by TESDA, enabling further resources and support for workforce development

# Building inclusive workforces



We've partnered across countries to address barriers to work, promote diversity and support businesses in building equitable and inclusive workforces.

## Gender equality in higher education systems in Brazil, Mexico and Peru



Our work with the British Council as part of the Going Global Partnerships programme has **advanced gender equality** in higher education across Latin American. In Brazil, the adoption of the Gender Equality Framework provided institutions with actionable strategies to enhance gender equality in STEM. In Mexico, our recommendations have strengthened mentoring and curriculum structures, and in Peru, a mentorship programme expanded opportunities for women in STEM and fostered international collaboration.

## Establishing an academy for lifelong learning and older workers in Latvia & Lithuania

In partnership with Akropolis and EBRD, we developed a training academy to address workforce inclusivity gaps for older workers and people with disabilities. We created a Customer Service Excellence Charter and an associated training programme, alongside an Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit and a dedicated training programme to support its implementation. Our support helped tenant HR teams improve recruitment and retention, upskill employees and establish a sustainable framework for lifelong learning, promoting a more **diverse workforce** across Akropolis.



*Partnering with People 1st International to establish the Akropolis Skills Academy has been transformative for the company. Their expertise in inclusive training and tools including the Customer Service Excellence Charter were impactful in elevating the service standards and workforce diversity across Akropolis malls. More than 240 older workers have been trained under the initiative, to date, while tenant retailers have developed competencies to foster more inclusive workplaces. This initiative sets a new benchmark for excellence in the retail sector that EBRD has been proud to support.” - Marko Stermseck - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)*

# Developing workforce capability and capacity

We've worked with businesses, governments and training providers to build workforce capability and capacity, enabling organisations to attract, retain and develop talent.

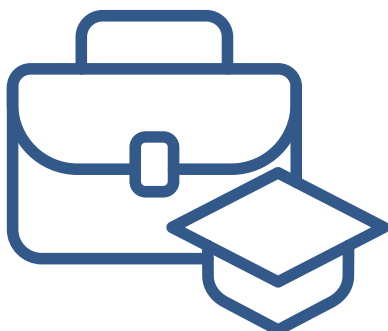
## Empowering small and medium businesses with enhanced HR strategies

We supported small and medium-sized businesses in Albania and Moldova as part of the EBRD Skills in Business programme, using the SME Human Resource Competency Framework to enhance HR strategies and workforce capabilities. Through our consultancy, we helped businesses design and implement training programmes, conduct workforce planning, identify skills gaps and strengthen talent acquisition strategies. Our work resulted in **stronger employee engagement, improved talent recruitment and retention** and enhanced capacity for growth, empowering SMEs to build a sustainable, skilled workforce.



*The team demonstrated impressive expertise, dedication and innovative approach. Their deep understanding of our needs has enabled them to design and deliver customised solutions that have significantly improved our workforce capabilities and contributed to a positive organisational culture.” - Ornela Cela, Human Resource Manager, WELL ALBANIA*

## Apprenticeship development for customer service, retail, travel & hospitality, Scotland



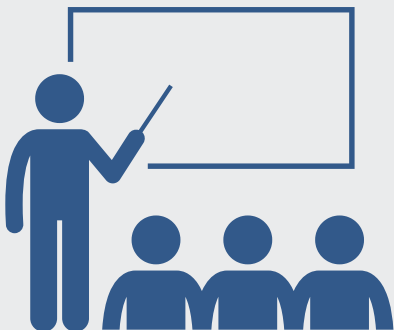
In partnership with Skills Development Scotland, we reshaped Modern Apprenticeships for hospitality, chefs, customer service, retail, and travel. By collaborating with employers, providers and apprentices, we developed frameworks that meet industry needs, are fit for purpose and are assessable and deliverable in the workplace. The frameworks support career transitions and transferable skills. These **employer-led qualifications will help strengthen workforce skills**, ensuring businesses in Scotland are equipped with the talent required.

## Enhancing customer service skills with WorldHost

We have empowered over **3,500** individuals through our renowned WorldHost Customer Service training programme, setting a benchmark for exceptional service. This year, we launched our latest workshop, WorldHost Dealing with Conflict, addressing the critical skills needed to manage challenging customer interactions effectively. This new addition ensures businesses are equipped to handle evolving demands and maintain service excellence.



## Strengthening training excellence across industries



Through our Certificate in Delivering Training programme we have empowered trainers from leading companies including Continuum Attractions, Roche Diagnostics and Meros Pharm to deliver impactful and effective training, enhancing workforce development and ensuring lasting skills growth across their organisations.



*Working with the team at People 1st International has been a great experience. From the initial enquiry to the delivery of the programme, the team has been flexible to our needs. What I particularly liked was that the training wasn't a 'tick box' programme you attended and passed - assessments and observations were a core part of the training. We will be working with the team again and I would highly recommend them." - Dorothy Stubbs, People Director, Continuum Attractions*

## Spotlight: Establishing the Hassan Allam Vocational Academy, Egypt



In partnership with Hassan Allam Holding (HAH) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), we led the creation of the Hassan Allam Vocational Academy in Egypt.

This project addressed the need for a sustainable workforce through vocational training and qualifications designed to enhance employability in the region. With 956 individuals trained, the academy is already making a significant impact. Its long-term effects are expected to boost economic inclusion, improve employment opportunities for young Egyptians and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of HAH.



### A baseline needs assessment

established key agreements, KPIs, training tools, quality assurance and a 2-year business plan for the Academy.



### 4 training programmes developed and delivered

- Housekeeping Induction
- Key Behaviours Induction
- Professional Certificate in Delivering Training
- Future Leaders Programme



**956 individuals trained** with capacity built through trainer development for ongoing delivery.



*The programme was beneficial, providing diverse insights, and those trained have a great chance for career advancement. Qualitative training like this enhances our business development, attracting potential clients interested in our efforts to improve operational skills.” - Mohamed Attar, Soft Service Manager, Eden Facilities Management*



# Let's work together



Our approach is centred around partnership and collaboration, and we invite you to join us in continuing to drive positive change.

People **1st**  
International

Unlock a skilled,  
productive and  
inclusive workforce.

→ **Email**

[info@people1st.co.uk](mailto:info@people1st.co.uk)

→ **Website**

[people1st.co.uk](https://people1st.co.uk)