



Background

The Skills in Business Programme aims to address these issues by enhancing SMEs' capacity to recruit and retain skilled young workers through work-based learning.

The project promotes a previous phase of work where People 1st International and EBRD developed an SME Human Resource Competency Framework, comprising 15 standards linked to specific outcomes and KPIs and provided training to local HR consultants across 8 countries to equip them with the tools and know-how to support local small businesses to increase the effectiveness of HR management in line with international best practice.

Skills in Business Standards



Recruitment and Retention	1. Developing Strategies	2. Competency Frameworks	3. People Policies	4. Employability Programmes	5. Market Insights
	6. Recruitment and Selection	7. Inclusion	8. Retention	9. Performance Management	10. Leavers
Work-based Learning	11. Induction	12. Career planning	13. Learning Needs	14. Learning Approaches	15. Measuring Impact

Through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) funding, People 1st International have been engaged in a cross-regional intervention to provide businesses with the HR skills required to effectively manage their business.

The EBRD emphasises economic inclusion for development, measuring how economic institutions and education systems provide equal opportunities. Businesses face barriers when employing youth due to high unemployment and education gaps, impacting transitions to work. SMEs struggle to attract skilled labour, worsening labour force challenges.



Well, Albania

Between February and October 2024, People 1st International, in collaboration with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), supported Well, a chain of drug and beauty stores in Albania, through the Skills in Business (SiB) initiative.

The project aimed to strengthen Well's human resource (HR) practices, enhancing its organisational capacity to attract, retain and develop skilled employees.

Objectives / Challenges

With ten stores employing 110 individuals, 75% of whom are women and 81% under 35, Well faced challenges in creating clear career pathways and refining HR strategies to ensure sustainable growth and employee satisfaction.

The primary objective was to enhance Well's HR infrastructure by developing a robust HR strategy, establishing competency frameworks, creating clear career pathways, implementing structured learning and development initiatives and measuring the impact of HR interventions through set KPIs.

Outcome / Impact

Key outputs from the collaboration included:

- Development and adoption of a comprehensive HR strategy, which includes ten strategic priorities addressing recruitment, onboarding, employee development, diversity and social responsibility.
- Creation of tailored recruitment and retention strategies focusing on enhancing the employer brand and improving employee experiences. Detailed action plans embedded careers information on Well's website, leveraging social media for recruitment and fostering a positive working environment.
- Revised organisational charts and standardised job descriptions align individual roles with Well's strategic objectives and provide career pathways, particularly benefiting youth employees in front-line roles.
- A detailed induction programme including a buddy system and evaluation tools supports new employee integration and retention.
- Workshops equipped HR staff and senior managers with tools to enhance performance management and employee development.
- SMART goals and KPIs were introduced to track the effectiveness of HR interventions, providing a structured approach to continuous improvement.

The project's success was driven by Well's commitment to adopting best practices and engaging actively in capacity-building workshops. The resulting HR strategies and frameworks have positioned Well to improve employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention while enhancing its competitiveness in Albania's retail sector.

Testimonial

"We are honoured to be selected by EBRD for the Skills in Business project and to work alongside People 1st International to make a real impact with this partnership! We extend our gratitude to everyone who made this project possible, particularly the entire People 1st International team. Their collaborative approach in tailoring solutions for successful development and implementation has been instrumental in achieving our goals. Moving forward, we build on these successes, improve our strategies and ensure our HR practices evolve to meet future challenges. Together, we will make a difference as Well Albania - a new Brand Employer committed to excellence!" - Ornela ÇELA | ALKOS GROUP | HRM



About People 1st International

People 1st International has been providing world-class skills solutions for over 50 years. Our expertise is trusted by organisations globally and is proven to:

- Increase staff retention
- Maximise the potential of the workforce
- Increase productivity and competitiveness
- Create effective people strategies
- Build a strong commitment to vocational lifelong skills



For more information,
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THE EBRD

**SKILLS
IN BUSINESS**