

PROJECT FACTSHEET



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Women in Business - Engage, Inspire, Empower
Bosnia and Herzegovina – March 2025

Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina



ENGAGE, INSPIRE, EMPOWER

SUPPORT TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Gender inequality in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to hinder women's economic participation. Women make up 51% of the population but only 38.8% of the labor force, with just 25% owning businesses. Traditional societal stereotypes, a lack of access to finance, and the absence of a supportive ecosystem further limit women's entrepreneurial and career opportunities.

In recent years, Switzerland has pursued a strategy of working more with and through local actors in BiH in order to increase local ownership and sustainable use of existing capacities. Switzerland supports women's economic empowerment by partnering with three local organisations to promote business development, leadership skills and gender-sensitive policies. These three well-established local organisations, which already support women's economic empowerment, will together ensure a wide reach across the country:

- [Foundation for Socioeconomic Development 787](#)
- [Centre for Education and Research Nahla](#)
- [Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Republika Srpska](#)

The aim is to provide more substantial and diversified support for women's increased participation in the country's economic development. These partners will also jointly advocate for the adoption of gender-responsive and evidence-based policies and the allocation of adequate resources for women's economic empowerment by governments at all levels.

GOALS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

This initiative will create a stronger, more inclusive economic environment for women in BiH resulting with more inspired, engaged and empowered women proactively participate in and increasingly contribute to economic development of BiH.

- More women become self-confident to start or to advance their businesses in growth-oriented sectors.
- More women aspire to advance their careers and to assume managerial positions in the private sector.
- Gender-responsive and evidence-based policies establish a conducive institutional framework along with the necessary budgetary support for promoting women in business.



Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Zmaja od Bosne 11, RBBH Building, object B, BiH-71000 Sarajevo

Tel. +387 33 27 58 50, +387 33 25 40 30, Fax +387 33 57 01 20

E-Mail: sarajevo@eda.admin.ch

www.eda.admin.ch/bosnia-and-herzegovina

WHY IS IT ESSENTIAL TO CONTINUE INVESTING IN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN?

When women participate more in the economy, everyone benefits. Increasing women's involvement in the workforce can drive stronger and more inclusive economic growth while also helping to address the country's skilled labor shortage.

However, women entrepreneurs often face significant challenges, such as limited access to essential skills, business knowledge, financial resources, and professional networks. Support systems like entrepreneurial networks, women's business associations, and mentorship programs can provide valuable insights into starting and managing a business, financial planning, marketing, and crisis management.

Investing in skills training—especially through non-formal education—can open doors to better job opportunities and greater economic independence for women.

WHO IS THE PROJECT FOR?

- Women/girls aged 16 and over, who want to develop their skills and start a career or run a business, and women who want to advance in their career or change careers;
- Young and adult women who are interested in starting or running businesses in potential growth sectors such as ICT, tourism, energy production, industrial food processing, services, trade and creative industries;
- Mid-career women interested in taking a leadership role in the family business or the legal entity that employs them.



PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME:

Women in Business – Engage, Inspire, Empower

DOMAIN:

Sustainable economic and migration cooperation

LAND/REGION:

Bosnia and Herzegovina

IMPLEMENTERS:

Foundation for Socioeconomic Development 787, Centre for Education and Research Nahla, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Republika Srpska

PARTNERS:

Civil society organizations, public institutions, media, private sector actors

STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Despite making up half the population, women in BiH face significant economic barriers. This project will provide tailored support to aspiring and existing female entrepreneurs, promote career development, and advocate for better policies to foster a more inclusive economy.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To increase women's participation in economic development by enhancing their entrepreneurial and leadership opportunities and advocating for gender-responsive policies.

TARGET GROUP:

Women and girls aged 16+ who seek to start businesses, develop careers, or take on leadership roles. The project particularly focuses on high-potential growth sectors such as ICT, tourism, energy production, food processing, services, and trade.

COSTS:

CHF 2,850,000 (SDC contribution)

CHF 5,140,000 (Total project budget, including local and external contributions)

DURATION:

01.12.2023 – 30.11.2027

Together, we move forward



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