



National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina



Bosnia and Herzegovina is a sovereign state with a decentralised political and administrative structure. It comprises two entities: Republic of Srpska (RS) and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), and Brčko District.⁽¹⁾ The country, located in the Balkan Peninsula of South-eastern Europe, is contiguous to the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia, and the Republic of Montenegro, with a 20 km shoreline on the Adriatic Sea. Lying on the Dinaric Alps, its total of 51,209 km² surface area is dominated by a hilly and mountainous topography comprised of 42 percent mountains, 29 percent karst, 24 percent hills, and 5 percent lowlands⁽²⁾ with 42 percent used as agricultural and 53 percent forestry lands.⁽³⁾ The country has a temperate continental climate in the northern and central parts, an alpine climate in the mountain regions, and a Mediterranean climate in the south and southeast. The country ranks 81 out of 186 countries according to the Human Development Index (2016), and its rating increased significantly from rank 68 in 2005, indicating positive development over the past decade.⁽⁴⁾

Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced steady economic growth since the mid-1990s, transforming the country from a low-income to an upper-middle income status, with an increased GDP per capita from US\$737 in 1996 to US\$4,409 in 2016.⁽⁵⁾ Its population of 3.8 million is largely urban (40.1 percent) and is mostly settled in the northern and central areas of the country. The capital Sarajevo is the country's main urban hub.⁽⁶⁾

We increasingly face extreme events as a result of climate change. We are acting proactively through adaptation planning to protect the country.

Minister Srebrenka Golić, UNFCCC and GCF focal point for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Climate change risks⁽⁷⁾

Extreme weather events in Bosnia and Herzegovina are becoming more frequent and climate models predict that this is set to continue. Annually rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are resulting in extreme weather conditions throughout all parts of the country. The country has become prone to the impacts of heat waves, intensive rainfall, and windstorms, which have caused substantial material and financial losses as well as casualties. Since the beginning of this century, disastrous floods (2001, 2002, 2009, 2010, 2014) and severe droughts (2003, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013) have increased the pressure on key sectors, such as agriculture, water management, housing, health, forestry, tourism, and energy, as well

as on the management of protected areas, with the biggest financial impacts occurring in the housing sector. The floods in 2014 were the worst to hit the country in 150 years, causing 23 fatalities. The disaster was estimated to have caused total economic losses amounting to US\$2.7 billion, equal to 15 percent of the country's overall GDP,⁽⁸⁾ and a slowdown of the predicted economic growth by 1.1 percent. The country's adaptive capacity is challenged by a large vulnerable population on the poverty line, high unemployment rates of around 40 percent, wartime destruction of infrastructure, limited climate data, and a lag in technological innovation.



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Groundwork for supporting the process to formulate and implement NAPs

Policy, planning and budgeting⁽⁹⁾

Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks a systematic approach to climate change adaptation. Its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), submitted in 2017, does not outline adaptation pledges or provide information on anticipated economy-wide costs for the realisation of its targets. The country's medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal framework – the Economic Reform Programme 2017-2019 – does not reference the issue of climate change, and neither do key strategies of climate sensitive sectors such as the Strategic Plan for Health Care Development 2008-2018 or the 2016 National Renewable Energy Action Plan.

However, the governments and key domestic stakeholders recognise that adaptation planning is crucial to sustainable economic and holistic social development. Bosnia and Herzegovina has progressively initiated measures to tackle the adverse effects of climate change both nationally and internationally. Its Climate Change Adaptation and Low Emissions Development Strategy, adopted in 2013, outlines an innovative economic development plan that focuses on the synergy between economic growth and the prevention of environmental degradation especially in the sectors of agriculture, biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems, energy, forestry, health, tourism, and water management.

The strategy links with existing sustainable development goals and plans, poverty alleviation, and economic growth strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region. It represents the first policy framework to address climate change impacts. This will catalyse international investments and support the successful implementation of climate change adaptation projects. Whilst climate change and disaster risk reduction are not yet included in budgeting processes on any level of Government,⁽¹⁰⁾ the two domestic financial institutions administering environmental funds – the Republika Srpska Environmental Fund (2002) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Environmental Fund (2003) – are starting to increase the country's economic focus on environmental issues.

In 2015, the Government sought the expert advice of the joint UNDP / UN Environment NAP-GSP to scope and develop national and sectoral National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). National and local authorities are increasingly motivated to integrate climate change-related risks, coping strategies, and opportunities into ongoing development planning and budgeting processes. Additional financing of US\$2.5 million has been requested from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2017, with the support of UNDP.

Preparing for adaptation planning

Climate assessments and analyses to inform medium- to long term adaptation budgeting and planning are carried out both nationally, and within the region surrounding Bosnia and Herzegovina. Assessments have been made for the following sectors: agriculture, water resources, human health, forestry, biodiversity, and vulnerable ecosystems. However, all three National Communications to the UNFCCC (2010, 2013, and 2017) reached the conclusion that the assessments of climate change impacts require significant improvements in the processes of monitoring, analysis, data modelling, and the impacts on key sectors.⁽¹¹⁾

The country's overarching climate change policy – the Climate Change Adaptation and Low Emissions Development Strategy – outlines the lack of reliable information to enable the assessment of climate change and its impacts, and to enhance long-term adaptation planning. To date, gender disaggregated data is unavailable, research on climate-related impacts has been limited, and adaptation approaches have not been fully integrated across disciplines.

Implementation of adaptation actions

Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated medium and long term climate change adaptation planning processes in 2015 together with the support of UNDP under the umbrella of the NAP GSP. This included a scoping and gap analysis as well as facilitation of stakeholder consultations. Recent and ongoing donor-funded programmes in support of national adaptation targets in Bosnia and Herzegovina include:

- Biomass Energy for Employment and Energy Security in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2009-2019, the GEF / Czech Republic (MoFA/DA) / UNDP)
- Green Economic Development Project (2013-2018, SIDA / UNDP and national funds)
- Capacity Development for the Integration of Global Environmental Commitments into National Policies and Development Decision Making (2014-2017, the GEF / UN Environment)
- Technology transfer for climate resilient flood management in Vrbas River Basin (2015-2020, the GEF-SCCF / UNDP)





The process to formulate and implement NAPs in BiH

Institutional arrangements

The highest governmental institutions involved in the NAP process include the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering, and Ecology (MSPCEE) as the country's UNFCCC and GCF focal point, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MoFTER) as a state-level ministry in charge of coordination of climate change adaptation activities throughout the country, and the Federal Ministry for Environment and Tourism (FMOET).

Also involved are two sectoral Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management (Republic of Srpska Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management – MAFW RS and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry – FMAWF). This reflects the vulnerability of water, agriculture, and forestry sectors in BiH.

Challenges

Following a NAP orientation workshop held in 2016, stakeholder consultations revealed that challenges include insufficient availability and dissemination of climate-relevant information, as well as inefficient coordination mechanisms, both horizontally between line ministries, as well as vertically between sub-national Government entities. Whilst the housing sector under the Ministry of Physical Planning incurs the highest repair costs following climate-related events, climate change adaptation strategies are not yet fully integrated into ministries in charge of engineering and spatial planning.

Successes

The Fund for Environmental Protection of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina now incorporates a Revolving Fund that provides sustainable financing for the energy efficiency sector. A corresponding agreement with Union Bank has already been reached. This could become a potential supplemental funding source for climate change adaptation at the municipal level. In addition, risk management has become a top priority for cities and municipalities given past experiences with floods, droughts, and landslides. There are close connections between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. In 2015, the Municipal Association of Republika Srpska adopted its 2015-2019 strategy, mainly covering projects in the environment and energy efficiency sectors. Recently, the Association signed an MoU to increase resilience in urban areas, commencing with awareness-raising and training provision on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the local level.

NAP support

Support to the advancement of Bosnia and Herzegovina's NAP processes is provided by the joint UNDP-UN Environment NAP-GSP, funded by the GEF, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), as well as national ministries of key sectors such as the Forestry, Agriculture, and Water Management Departments. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is keen to support sub-sovereign resilient development finance through the NAP support initiative.

October 2015 –

The UNFCCC focal point from the Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology, on behalf of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, officially requested the NAP-GSP to provide advice and support for scoping and recommendations on the development of the country's sectoral NAP.

April 2017 –

Initial formulation and submission of a Readiness and Preparatory Support Proposal for adaptation planning to the GCF.

March 2018 –

The GCF proposal for NAP funding was approved.

May 2016 –

Bosnia and Herzegovina officially launched the NAP process. This began with a national consultation that engaged sector ministries and local Government in Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH. A NAP orientation workshop for Bosnia and Herzegovina was conducted for the representatives of 41 organisations, including 15 ministries from three national entities: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District.

February 2018 –

Revision and re-submission of the Readiness and Preparatory Support Proposal for adaptation planning to the GCF.

What is the process to formulate and implement NAPs?

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2010, to enhance country-led planning and preparedness for climate change adaptation (CCA) in the medium and long-term. The objectives of the NAPs are to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to facilitate the integration of adaptation into all levels of development planning. The NAP process is multi-sectoral, involving Ministries of Environment as well as Planning and Finance, in addition to other key ministries. By bringing greater institutional integration and coordination to adaptation planning, NAPs can enhance ongoing national development planning processes, safeguard development gains, and build resilience.



Opportunities

Even though the NDC does not specify clear targets on adaptation, the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to tackle the negative impacts of climate change. Its Climate Change Adaptation and Low Emission Development Strategy of 2013 is the country's first comprehensive guidance related to climate change and is based on four specific outcomes covering: i) climate change risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities supporting evidence-based policy development; ii) effective institutional and regulatory frameworks; iii) mainstreaming climate change adaptation approaches into decision-making, and; iv) effective resourcing with timely and effective implementation. A NAP Readiness and Preparatory Support Proposal was approved by the GCF in March 2018. The project aims to advance adaptation planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina by focusing on the following aspects: sectoral approaches; upgrading the knowledge base for adaptation; prioritising adaptation interventions for the medium-term; building institutional capacities for integrating climate change adaptation; and demonstrating innovative ways of financing adaptation at the sub-national and local government levels.

Key documents

- Climate Change Adaptation and Low Emissions Development Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013)
- Third National Communication to the UNFCCC (2017)
- First NDC (2017)
- Economic Reform Programme 2017-2019 (2017)

Notes

- (1) [Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2017\). *Bosnia and Herzegovina First NDC.*](#)
- (2) [Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2017\). *Third National Communication and Second Biennial Update Report on Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.*](#)
- (3) [Central Intelligence Agency \(2018\). *The World Fact Book.*](#)
- (4) [United Nations Human Development Programme \(2017\). *National Human Development Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina.*](#)
- (5) Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Personal Communication, 20 March 2018.
- (6) [Central Intelligence Agency \(2018\).](#)
- (7) [Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2017\); Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2013\). *Climate Change Adaptation and Low-Emission Development Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina;*](#) United Nations Development Programme (2018). *Readiness and Preparatory Support Proposal to the GCF;* United Nations Development Programme (2016). *NAP-GSP Country Mission Report.*
- (8) [The World Bank \(2017\). *Building Back Better in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*](#)
- (9) United Nations Development Programme (2018).
- (10) The country is governed by the two entities the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska. The Federation is further divided into cantons and sub-divided into municipalities, Srpska is directly divided into municipalities.
- (11) [Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2010\). *Initial National Communication of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\);*](#) [Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2013\). *Second National Communication of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;*](#)
- (12) [The World Bank \(2018\). *Country Data.*](#)
- (13) [United Nations Development Programme \(2014, p.19\). *Bosnia and Herzegovina Floods 2014 – Recovery Needs Assessment.*](#)

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organisations
attended the NAP-
GSP workshop

1/5⁽¹²⁾

of the population is
employed in
agriculture

US\$ 230⁽¹³⁾ mn

losses from the
2014 floods
in agriculture

7

incidences of
disastrous flooding
since 2001

7

severe droughts
since 2000

About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, are assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and provides opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.

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