

VOLUNTARY REVIEW



IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2030 AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES _____	6	SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere _____	48
LIST OF GRAPHS _____	7	SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture _____	49
FOREWORD _____	8	SDG 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages _____	52
KEY MESSAGES _____	10	SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all _____	56
INTRODUCTION _____	12	SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls _____	62
1. THE REVIEW PROCESS _____	14	SDG 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all _____	67
2. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES _____	15	SDG 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all _____	69
2.1. Agenda 2030 and the strategic development planning and management system in u BiH _____	15	SDG 8. Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all _____	73
2.2. The SDG Framework in BiH _____	16	SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation _____	80
2.2.1. Good governance and public sector management _____	18	SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries _____	84
2.2.2. Smart growth _____	21	SDG 11. Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable _____	88
2.2.3. Society of equal opportunities _____	23	SDG 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns _____	94
2.2.4. Horizontal theme: Human capital for the future _____	26	SDG 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts _____	98
2.2.5. Horizontal theme: Leave no one behind _____	26	SDG 15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss _____	100
2.3. Incorporating Agenda 2030 into the key strategic documents _____	28	SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels _____	102
2.4. Institutional mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and reporting _____	29	SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development _____	105
2.5. The monitoring and reporting system _____	30	7. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES _____	107
2.5.2. The Annual Report on the SDG Implementation in BiH _____	32	Annex 1. Overview of SDG indicators, targets and results _____	108
2.5.3. Voluntary National Review for the High-Level Political Forum in New York _____	32		
2.6. The Agenda 2030 localization in BiH _____	33		
2.6.1. The civil society contribution to the Agenda 2030 implementation _____	36		
2.6.2. The role of young people in local community development and achievement of the SDGs _____	37		
2.6.3. Cooperation with the academic community _____	40		
3. FINANCING THE AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION IN BiH _____	42		
4. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT _____	44		
5. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS _____	47		

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The review process supported by UN Volunteers	14
Figure 2. The main elements of the strategic development planning and management system	15
Figure 3. An overview of the Vision 2030	17
Figure 4. Visual presentation of the development pathway “Good governance and public sector management”	19
Figure 5. Visual presentation of the “Smart Growth” development pathway	21
Figure 6. Visual presentation of accelerators under the “Society of Equal Opportunities” development pathway	23
Figure 7. Development pathways, accelerators and drivers	25
Figure 8. Programme for e-learning about the Framework and the Agenda 2030 implementation	27
Figure 9. Strategic documents adopted at all levels of government	28
Figure 10. The Framework implementation through various work plans of institutions at all levels of government	28
Figure 11. A Practitioner Network meeting	29
Figure 12. Participants of the “Green Development” Conference	30
Figure 13. SDG portal	31
Figure 14. VNR BiH 2019	32
Figure 15. Sustainable Development Center Bijeljina	35
Figure 16. A meeting of the Council and BHAAAS in Sarajevo	40
Figure 17. The SDG Business Week in BiH, 2019	40
Figure 18. The SDG Week in BiH, 2021	40
Figure 19. Experimental green roofs in Banja Luka	41
Figure 20. Light up SDG across the Parliamentary Assembly building	44
Figure 21. Signatories of the Pledge of Sustainable Development	45
Figure 22. Meeting of sustainable development business mentors	45
Figure 23. Jaffa commerce	46
Figure 24. Solar panels of IMACO Systemtechnik	46
Figure 25. Worker employed through EU4B project, eco cheese Pudja. He is also an EU4AGRI beneficiary	51
Figure 26. Konjević polje, EU4AGRI beneficiary, “Agrofood”, Senad Omerović	51
Figure 27. Integration of IT and media literacy into formal education	59
Figure 28. STEM equipment	60
Figure 29. Lamija Hadžimešić, «Huso Hodžić Tešanj» Primary School	60
Figure 30. Structure of candidates by sex in general and local elections	65
Figure 31. Training of unemployed people for work on CNC machines	77
Figure 32. Jelenjača, Lukomir	79
Figure 33. Jahorina	79
Figure 34. Banja Luka	83
Figure 35. Pilot interventions in Banja Luka	83
Figure 36. Association «Red Cross Prozor-Rama» in the field	85
Figure 37. Drop-in center in Brčko	87
Figure 38. Promotion of clean, healthy, and sustainable environment in BiH	88
Figure 39. Cement Factory Kakanj	97
Figure 40. The River Vrbas	99

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Priorities of local governments _____	33
Graph 2. Required support for local government _____	34
Graph 3: Partnerships with the private sector _____	34
Graph 4. Cooperation with civil society organizations _____	35
Graph 5. Priorities of young people _____	38
Graph 6: Motivating young people to engage in local community development _____	39
Graph 7: Inclusion of young people in the local community development through digitalization _____	39

FOREWORD

Only six months after Bosnia and Herzegovina presented its first Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. The development of the SDG Framework in BiH, which was in its final phase at the start of the pandemic, had to be postponed by 12 months in order to assess the consequences of the pandemic for our economy and society as a whole. It was necessary to take into account the new realities and describe them in the document, especially in terms of defining measures to strengthen disaster resilience and adjusting the midterm and final targets. Finally, the drafting of this important document was finalized by the end of 2020, and the document was adopted by April 2021 by the governments of the entities and the BD and by the Council of Ministers of BiH.

Following the adoption of the SDG Framework in BiH, efforts were made to integrate it into various development and strategic documents across all levels of government, from local to state-level. The aim was to establish connections with public budgets and ensure funding for projects that support the implementation of SDGs by 2022. Simultaneously, the establishment of a Working Group was initiated, consisting of representatives from institutions involved in creating the SDG Framework in BiH and the Voluntary Review.

From the outset, it became evident that the principle of “Leave No One Behind” could not be effectively implemented without localizing the SDGs. Subsequently, visits were conducted to local government units across the country, which will be further elaborated upon in this Review.

Alongside this process, a network of practitioners has been established in the FBiH over the past few years. This network brings together representatives from all cantonal authorities, development planning units, and the Federation Institute for Development Programming. Within this network, meetings have been organized in various locations over the past four years: Goražde in June 2018, Bihać in June 2019, Neum in September 2021, and Tuzla in November 2022. These meetings included discussions on various topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During these gatherings, representatives from the cantonal authorities were informed about the implementation processes of the SDGs in BiH. Additionally, they were provided with information regarding the contribution and specific activities undertaken by local government units in municipalities to advance the SDGs’ implementation.

Recognizing the complex nature of Agenda 2030, it became evident that relying solely on public funds would not be sufficient to achieve SDG implementation by the end of the decade. Consequently, efforts

were initiated to explore new and innovative financing methods, aiming to foster the development of financial markets and strengthen public-private partnerships. To facilitate this undertaking, institutions involved in leading this process include representatives from Finance Ministries at all levels of government, along with the involvement of numerous domestic and foreign experts, supported significantly by UNDP and the UN system as a whole. This process holds immense importance in diversifying financing sources and identifying more effective approaches to the implementation of Agenda 2030.

Furthermore, collaboration with the private sector, civil society, and the academic community regarding the implementation of the SDGs persisted and was enhanced through ongoing dialogue and targeted initiatives. The objective was to ensure that these stakeholders continue to actively contribute to the attainment of the SDGs in partnership with the public sector.

Nevertheless, the journey towards sustainable development faced additional hurdles due to various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, the energy crisis, and substantial negative economic repercussions, including a notable surge in inflation.

During the period between the two Voluntary Reviews, spanning the past four years, BiH actively engaged in the exchange of knowledge and experiences with other countries, notably within the Western Balkans and beyond. The presentation of this Voluntary National Review

(VNR) and the subsequent sharing of experiences and best practices with other nations will further stimulate the process of SDG implementation. It is crucial that we attentively listen to one another regarding the measures taken to alleviate the consequences stemming from external influences.

Despite the challenges and obstacles encountered, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains dedicated to expediting the implementation process of Agenda 2030. We are committed to enhancing cooperation with both domestic and international partners to generate added value, building upon the already fruitful collaboration with the United Nations system and the global community as a whole, with special recognition to our partnership with Sweden.



KEY MESSAGES

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be committed to the transformation and modernization of the entire society in accordance with Agenda 2030 with a view to achieving good and efficient administration and public sector management, a society of equal opportunities and smart growth.

Since the European Union accession process is the main political goal of the country, it is very important to emphasize that there is full synergy in the implementation of both agendas. Therefore, better results in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda means stronger progress towards full membership in the European Union.

After the last Voluntary Review, presented at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the most important document for the implementation of Agenda 2030 - the SDG Framework and harmonized most of the key development strategies at different levels of government with it.

Unfortunately, there has been a significant setback due to the new challenges the world has faced in recent years, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. With the resulting rising rate of inflation, especially rising energy prices, some achievements in poverty reduction are reversed.

Nevertheless, strong efforts are still being made to improve vertical cooperation between different levels of government, as well as horizontal exchange of best practices, especially between local communities and different stakeholders. This is especially challenging given the very complex federal structure of the country. While the ambitious

programme of the SDG localization process was launched a year ago, additional efforts are being made to engage the private sector, citizens and academia for the purpose of achieving tangible results on the ground.

It is generally recognized that better and more efficient administration and infrastructure upgrades could significantly improve the position of the most vulnerable groups and the fulfillment of the “Leave No One Behind” principle, but it was also realized that it would be almost impossible to achieve this without further involvement of the local communities.

Fully aware of the fact that public funds are insufficient for the implementation of the Agenda, the SDG Financing Working Group, which was established two years ago, made recommendations on how to mobilize other resources and proposed the introduction of innovative ways of financing that would bring us closer to achieving the set goals by 2030. We expect that the implementation of these proposals will begin in the period after the presentation of the Voluntary Review. In addition, the progress made in digitalization, energy transition and efficiency brings new job and environmental protection opportunities.

With the aim of strengthening sound competition and greater commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs Business Pioneers Award was established to recognize the efforts of private sector to achieve sustainable development, and similar awards have since been established for the most prosperous local communities and the academic sector. BiH is even

leading a project within the South-East European cooperation process that initiates the annual Regional Award for academic researchers for the best innovations in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, through the online platform and the e-consultation process launched to create this Voluntary National Review, a wider group of civil society organizations and citizens were involved in this exercise.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been very active in promoting regional cooperation. Several very important initiatives and meetings were organized with the aim of improving the exchange of experiences, addressing the bottlenecks and similar challenges. Some of them include the meeting of the states of the EU Adriatic-Ionian macro-region focusing on a mid-term evaluation of the progress in achieving the SDGs, the annual meetings of the Western Balkan experts, launched at the end of 2021, activities within the Central European Initiative, and active participation in the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in Geneva.

We must be fully aware that in the second half of the SDG implementation period, we may encounter many unpredictable and unpleasant events and phenomena, which we have already faced in recent years. Therefore, we must make every effort to build resilience and to respond better and faster in order to overcome such situations as best as we can.



INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is an upper middle-income country and a European Union (EU) candidate country. It is located in the western part of the Balkan peninsula and shares a border with the Republic of Serbia to the northeast, with the Republic of Montenegro to the southeast, and with the Republic of Croatia to the north, west and south. BiH consists of two entities, the BiH Federation (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS), and of the Brčko District of BiH (BD BiH). According to 2021 estimates, there are 3.45 million people in the country and the median age of the population is 41 years.

BiH's path to EU membership was confirmed at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, where the European Council declared that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the EU. As an EU candidate country, BiH is working towards joining the EU. After signing and implementing the Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2015, BiH submitted an EU Membership Application in 2016. Based on the assessment of the country's readiness for EU accession negotiations, the EU unanimously granted candidate status to BiH in December 2022, marking a significant step towards its European future.

BiH has ratified the Paris Agreement, demonstrating its commitment to mitigating climate change. The authorities in BiH have also adopted a National Adaptation Plan, and the country is in the process of adopting the Fourth National Communication and Third Biennial Update Report under the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change. BiH actively works on implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and its contribution is reflected in the second Voluntary National Review and the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework.

Recognizing the importance of the SDGs and Agenda 2030, BiH views them as an opportunity to improve the social, economic, and environmental aspects of life in the country and foster regional collaboration. Sustainable development aligns with the policies of the EU and its member states, and EU accession is a top priority for BiH.

The first step in implementing Agenda 2030 in BiH was the creation and adoption of the SDG Framework. This document, developed collaboratively by all levels of government, outlines the development pathways through which BiH aims to contribute to the SDG implementation. Subsequently, the mainstreaming of the Framework into strategic documents at all government levels was initiated, ensuring a systematic approach to planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting on progress towards the SDG targets.

Global crises have slowed down the planned dynamics of SDG implementation in BiH, as in other countries. Efforts and resources have been redirected to mitigate the consequences of these crises across various aspects of life, such as rising energy and food prices, supporting the private sector, and the health sector.

The second Voluntary Review of BiH in 2023 provides an overview of the strategic and institutional framework for Agenda 2030 implementation, along with a review of progress towards achieving the SDGs and their targets. Special attention is given to priority SDGs and targets for BiH. The review highlights successful practices in SDG implementation in BiH while emphasizing the challenges that need to be addressed by all levels of government and society as a whole.



1. THE REVIEW PROCESS

The second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of BiH was prepared by the Council for Monitoring the Implementation of SDGs in BiH. The Council followed the United Nations Secretary General's Voluntary Common Reporting Guidelines for VNRs and utilized the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Handbook for the Preparation of VNRs from October 2022.

The review process received support from the SDGs Roll-Out Support and Private Sector Engagement Project, which was financed by Sweden and implemented by UNDP.

Close cooperation was maintained with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in BiH.

During the preparation of the second VNR, extensive consultations took place with all relevant stakeholders. In addition to the institutions at the BiH, FBiH, RS, and BD BiH levels, non-governmental organizations, representatives from the private sector, and UN agencies operating in BiH made significant contributions to the VNR's development.

Notably, five workshops were conducted with the support of UN Volunteers in March 2023.

These workshops involved a total of 55 representatives from non-governmental organizations, including those working with volunteers, foundations, and civil society organizations. They were held in major cities of BiH, namely Banja Luka, Brčko, Mostar, Tuzla, and Sarajevo. Furthermore, in March 2023, a workshop was organized with the Green Network, a coalition of 22 civil society organizations working towards mitigating the adverse effects of climate change on local communities.



Figure 1. The review process supported by UN Volunteers

The participation of young people in the preparation of the VNR was facilitated through the online platform U-Report BiH, operated by UNICEF BiH. More than 1,200 young individuals contributed to the process through this platform.

The private sector was also actively engaged during the review process, particularly companies that demonstrated their commitment to Agenda 2030 by participating in the SDG Business Pioneers Award in BiH and signing the BiH Sustainable Development Declaration.¹

To gather data and examples of good practices in the implementation of Agenda 2030 at the local level, the Council initiated the SDG localization initiative. This initiative served as a platform to address challenges and obstacles faced by municipalities and cities in BiH as they translated the SDGs into tangible actions and sustainable policies, ensuring inclusivity.

The Council encountered challenges due to the lack of recent and high-quality statistical data in the VNR preparation, including data from

the new Household Budget Survey in BiH. To compensate for this, the aforementioned consultations were utilized to obtain quantitative data in cases where statistical data were unavailable. Additionally, various materials developed within the UN system in BiH, particularly those related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, were utilized in the preparation of the VNR.

1

<https://zamisli2030.ba/bs/potpisivanjem-deklaracije-o-odrzivom-razvoju-zatvorena-prva-sedmica-odrzivog-razvoja-u-bih/>

2. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

2.1. AGENDA 2030 AND THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN U BiH

In BiH, strategic planning systems are established at each level of government through the specific legal framework, and Agenda 2030 is implemented through these systems. The 2014 Decision on Mid-Term Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Procedure in the BiH

Institutions and the 2015 Instruction on Mid-Term Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Methodology in the BiH Institutions exist at the BiH level. The term ‘development planning’ means the “integrity and compliance of possible, legitimate (necessary), sustainable economic, social, environmental, spatial and territorial adjustment to the needs and the Constitution- and law-based interests of the citizens and society as a whole”.

The legal framework which regulates the strategic development planning and management system at the entity

level – RS and FBiH - and at the level of BD BiH defines the leading principles of strategic development planning and management, including the sustainable development principle, development policy integration principle, gender equality, social inclusion and equal opportunities for all citizens, as well as the principle of vertical and horizontal coordination. The figure below shows the main elements of the strategic development planning and management system through which Agenda 2030 and the Framework are implemented.

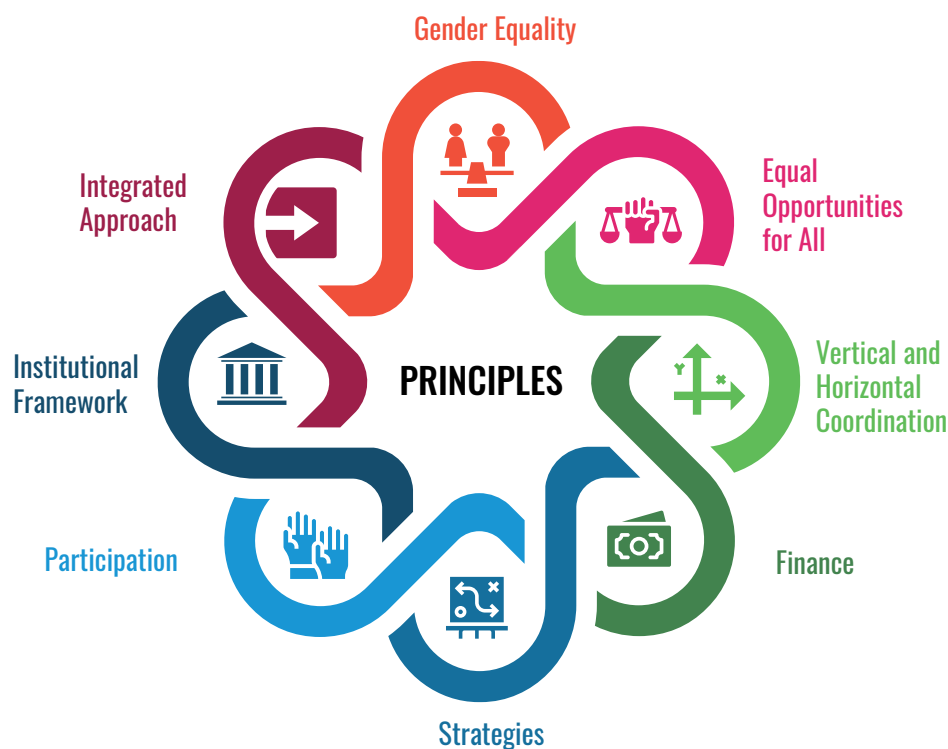


Figure 2. The main elements of the strategic development planning and management system

2.2. THE SDG FRAMEWORK IN BIH

The SDGs Framework in BiH represents a broader platform for achieving Agenda 2030 and as such, it serves to guide the strategic planning process at the levels of BiH, RS, FBiH and BD BiH. All levels of government in BiH, in accordance with their constitutional powers, define their respective priorities, measures and activities related to the implementation of the Framework, thus contributing to the achievement of Agenda 2030.

The Framework provides all levels of government in BiH with general development pathways and accelerators and defines precise indicators as a tool to measure progress towards sustainable development. As such, the Framework does not contain an action plan or a budget but is rather implemented through the strategic development planning and management system at all levels of government in the country. In this regard, the authorities have committed to strive to further strengthen the strategic development planning and management systems, since coherent systems, strong cross-sector links and coordination are essential for effective planning,

implementation, monitoring and reporting on Agenda 2030.

To address the development challenges encountered by BiH, the Framework outlines three overarching sustainable development pathways that guide all levels of government in the country. These pathways incorporate key accelerators, which are development policies or comprehensive interventions aimed at driving progress towards the SDGs. Within each accelerator, specific drivers are identified to address challenges and facilitate the desired transformations by 2030. Furthermore, each development pathway is accompanied by distinct targets and measurable indicators, enabling the monitoring of progress towards their attainment:

- Good governance and public sector management, in order to create an accountable, transparent, efficient and effective public sector, which can ensure the rule of law.
- Smart growth, which aims to ensure transformation of innovative and productive ideas into products and services

which may lead to creating highly qualified and highly paid jobs, leading toward higher productivity, accelerated growth, while preserving natural capital and reducing inequality in the society.

- Society of equal opportunities, in order to realize the “Leave No One Behind” principle and the goal for achieving gender equality. In addition to the administration reform as well as more rapid income growth and employment, it implies enhancing the social protection and health care systems at all levels in BiH.

The Framework also sets two horizontal themes:

- Human capital for the future
- The “Leave No One Behind” Principle.

This makes it possible to achieve a balance between social, economic and environmental aspects of development, with a special reference to the “Leave No One Behind” principle.

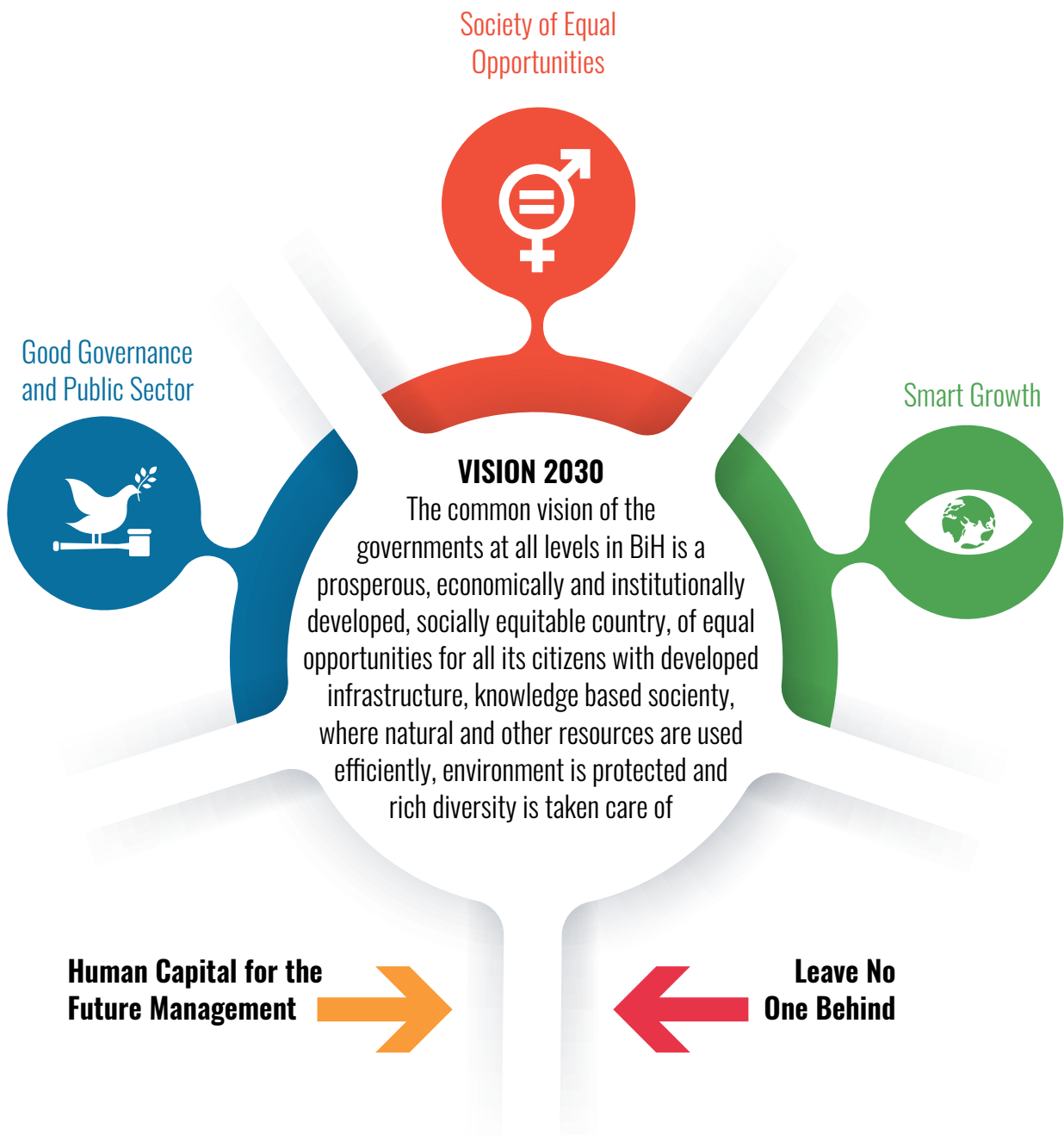


Figure 3. An overview of the Vision 2030



2.2.1. GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

The creation and implementation of better public policies and better provision of public services require a holistic approach to governance, supported by the implementation of Agenda 2030. This development pathway aims at supporting vertical and horizontal integration through harmonization of development and sectoral strategies with the Framework and their linking with public finances, which ensures its implementation.

In addition to strong institutions of the public sector, which deliver quality services to citizens, it is important for the governments in BiH to create enabling environment for the private sector growth, poverty reduction and to establish citizens' trust, that is, the relationship of trust which is created when citizens can participate in decision-making

processes and when they know that their voice is respected.

Responsible citizen-oriented administration and provision of better services to citizens and businesses are at the center of good governance. Digitalized services, based on modern technology, consider the needs of beneficiaries, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, foreigners and families with children.

As the private sector strives to improve its operations by providing people with new and easier access to its services, so do citizens have higher expectations for public service delivery. The importance of this became particularly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown that many traditional services can and must be delivered through digital technologies. These include new channels of communication with internal and external beneficiaries and provision of services (including through mobile devices), data-driven decision-making and business processes based on an increasing amount of data, improved human

resources and new procurement mechanisms, among others. At the same time, we should not ignore the challenge of digital transformation of the public sector, which is reflected in the fact that digital transformation of the public sector requires hiring new employees with digital competences and integrating tools, methods and culture of digital technologies into daily activities in the public administration. Finally, in order to accelerate the transformation, it is necessary to establish a system for measuring service user satisfaction, which will be transparent and accessible to the public.

Good governance and public sector management are of key importance for sustainable development in BiH in the future. Currently, good governance and public sector management are facing many challenges and obstacles. To solve them, the governments at all levels should apply accelerators and drivers listed under this development pathway.



Figure 4. Visual presentation of the development pathway “Good governance and public sector management“

► **Accelerator 1: Efficient, open, inclusive and accountable public sector** focuses on creating strong institutions which ensure delivery of quality services to citizens. The governments in BiH play a crucial role in fostering an enabling environment that promotes private sector growth, reduces poverty, and enhances citizen participation in decision-making processes. It is essential to continuously enhance consistent, functional, economically

efficient, and sustainable systems for coordinating, planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating policies aligned with Agenda 2030. This involves establishing effective mechanisms for allocating public funds and enhancing the capacity of the public administration through human resource development. Good governance is centered around an accountable administration that prioritizes citizens’ needs and

ensures improved service delivery to both individuals and businesses. Efficient management of public finances is vital for optimizing the utilization of financial resources and achieving the SDGs. Additionally, addressing the challenges posed by digital transformation in the public sector and reforming the management of public enterprises are necessary steps forward.

► **Accelerator 2: Rule of law, security and fundamental rights**

should lead to improvement of the overall administration and public sector management in BiH. Adequate functioning of the judicial system and efficient fight against corruption are of paramount importance and equally so important is observance of the fundamental rights through the legislation and in practice. To the end of supporting economic development through an increase in investments and other commercial activities in the country, the judicial system in BiH must demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in its work. Simultaneously, it is necessary to proceed with digitalization of government services for enterprises and continue to protect workers' rights. With the aim of achieving a high degree of security, it is necessary to further strengthen cooperation and capacities of the security structures in BiH. The fight against different forms of crime, including cybercrime and terrorism, has to be intensified by establishing records on investigations, criminal prosecution and acquittal/conviction verdicts. Within the European integration process, border management and facilitation of mobility of people and goods become even more important in the context of sustainable development.

► **Accelerator 3: Resilience to disasters**

means prevention of threats of pandemics, climate-induced disasters, use of developed biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear weapons, (ab)use of artificial intelligence, the numerous space events etc. Apart from such low-probability, high-impact events, there are also higher-probability, lower-impact events, such as technical (system failure, negligence, accidents etc.) and armed risks and treats (terrorism, sabotage, civil unrests, wars etc.). Each country must develop resilience to disasters, that is, its capacity to prevent occurrences of harmful events, to protect from them, to mitigate their consequences, to respond to them and to recover. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt the appropriate strategies and develop risk and crises management plans. It is particularly important to ensure the protection and functioning of key infrastructure and public goods.

For the monitoring of the Good Governance and Public Sector Management development pathway, a set of indicators has been established. This includes one SDG indicator, one alternative SDG indicator, two alternative indicators, and two adjusted SDG indicators. These indicators are crucial for tracking progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the accelerators identified within this pathway.



2.2.2. SMART GROWTH

Smart growth aims to ensure transformation of innovative and productive ideas into products and services which may lead to creating highly paid jobs, accelerated growth, while preserving natural capital and reducing inequality in the society. Maintaining macroeconomic stability, strengthening the market and improving the economic management (in both public and

private sectors) are preconditions for expanding entrepreneurship, companies with rapid growth, innovations which effectively use resources, digitalization and knowledge-based economic activities.

In addition, this development pathway emphasizes the expansion of the scope of entrepreneurship by improving the overall business conditions and by increasing government spending for research, development and innovations.

Also, quality education and life-long learning, better alignment of the labor market supply with demand and investment in science, research, technology and innovations, as well as putting a stronger focus on the green economy policies, are extremely important for smart growth. This particularly applies to energy, utility services, tourism sector, as well as urbanization and physical planning. The “smart growth” development pathway contains 5 accelerators:

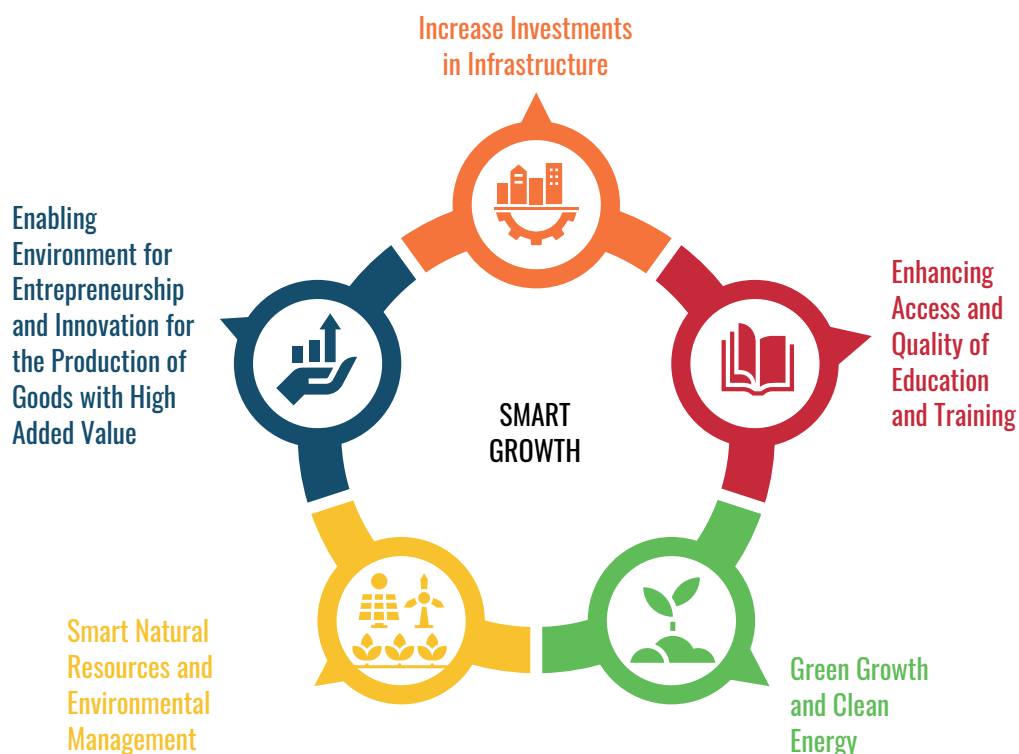


Figure 5. Visual presentation of the “Smart Growth” development pathway

► **Accelerator 1: Enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovations for production of high value export-oriented goods**

focuses on facilitation of business operations, digitalization of the economy, support to fast-growing companies and start-ups and a stronger role of local communities. Furthermore, for the purpose of producing high value export-oriented goods, attention is given to the creation of a more enabling environment for innovation and integration into global value chains. Among other things, this is achieved through an increase in investment in research and development in both private and public sectors and better integration with the diaspora and mobilization of its potential.

► **Accelerator 2: Increasing investments in infrastructure**

is particularly directed to modernization of digital and transport infrastructure. Improving the public digital infrastructure ensures the availability of relevant data to research and development organizations, faculties and companies for the purpose of more adequate performance of their functions while reducing individual costs of purchasing hardware and software. Balanced development of transport infrastructure is a key prerequisite for strengthening competitiveness, social cohesion and overall sustainable development. Of particular importance is ensuring equal access to modern transport infrastructure in all parts of the country, including sustainable public transport.

► **Accelerator 3: Enhancing access to and quality of education and training**

consists of several drivers aimed at improving access to and quality of all forms of education through curricular reform and continuous development of teachers' capacities, modernization of schools and teaching methods. Of particular importance is the improvement of the inclusion of children in preschool education (3-6 years) and the development of digital skills to ensure that digital services are used in society. Given the dynamic nature of future employment and career opportunities, it is essential to establish an efficient lifelong learning system. This system should facilitate the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as foster strong connections between educational institutions and the business community. By prioritizing lifelong learning, individuals can adapt to evolving job requirements and stay competitive in the ever-changing labor market.

► **Accelerator 4: Green growth and clean energy**

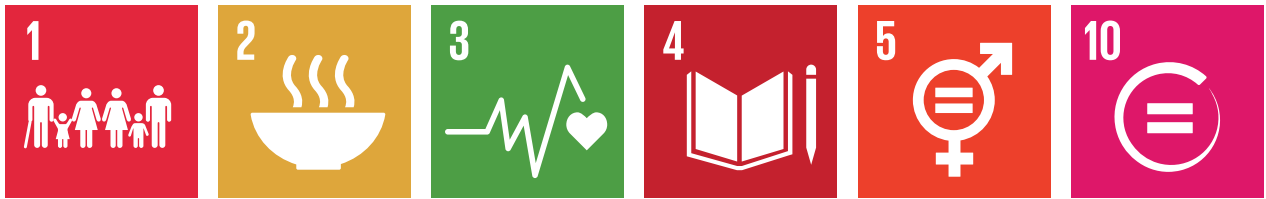
is focused on the following drivers: decarbonization of the energy sector, energy poverty reduction, decentralization of the power system and development of the necessary "green" skills and jobs. Decarbonization of the energy sector (energy transition) primarily focuses on enhancing energy efficiency, increasing the share of renewable energy in final consumption and fuel switching (electrification) in the heating and transport sectors. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that everyone has at least a minimum of financially accessible and reliable energy supply. Decentralization of the power system includes democratization allowing competitors - individual small energy producers - to compete with monopolies. With changes in the

labor market and the transition to a low-carbon economy, there is a need to adapt TVET (technical and vocational education and training) and university curricula to develop the necessary „green“ skills and jobs.

► **Accelerator 5: Smart natural resource and environment management emphasizes**

sustainable tourism, strengthening control and monitoring of ecosystem quality, development of the circular economy system, protection and renewal of natural capital, disaster risk management and demining of still mine-contaminated areas. Due to climate change and high exposure to natural and man-made hazards, which further complicate the socio-economic development of the country, it is necessary to strengthen multisectoral cooperation of all relevant stakeholders, which will focus on disaster prevention, including the creation of development and sectoral policies that consider disaster risks and climate change.

To effectively track the progress of this development pathway, a comprehensive set of indicators has been established, consisting of 24 SDG indicators, 15 alternative indicators, and 6 adjusted indicators. In total, there are 45 indicators in place. These indicators serve as benchmarks for measuring the attainment of targets within the accelerators mentioned. The following text presents an overview of the targets and corresponding indicators, highlighting the progress achieved thus far.



2.2.3. SOCIETY OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The development pathway of a society of equal opportunities is closely linked to the principle of “Leave No One Behind.” It involves addressing various aspects such as improving public administration,

fostering income growth and employment, and enhancing social and healthcare systems. By doing so, it aims to provide better protection for those who face higher poverty and vulnerability risks, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, residents of remote rural areas, women, children, and others. This focus on social cohesion is accompanied by efforts

to activate individuals, develop their skills, and provide lifelong learning opportunities, especially for those facing barriers in accessing the labor market. Additionally, there is a need to protect individuals from risks and unexpected events that can lead to poverty throughout their lives. To achieve this pathway, five accelerators have been identified:



Figure 6. Visual presentation of accelerators under the “Society of Equal Opportunities” development pathway

► **Accelerator 1: Enhancing social protection policies** will be implemented through multiple drivers: focused and better targeting of public expenditures for social protection of the groups most in need, strengthening infrastructure and competencies of service providers through introduction of new models of service delivery and upgrading the system for identification and monitoring of vulnerable families and at-risk families.

► **Accelerator 2: Activation and employment** will be achieved through two drivers. The first drivers are activation policies and employment measures aimed at including vulnerable groups in the labor market. This may include developing an identification system, preparation for work (upskilling and reskilling), employment, support and monitoring of vulnerable categories, cooperation with the employer etc. Support to social entrepreneurship development as a model which simultaneously contributes to employment and support to vulnerable groups is also an important segment. In parallel, one of significant obstacles to the employment of women is their caregiving responsibilities at home, which include caring for the elderly,

children and people with disabilities. Although they perform the social role of the state, their work is neither valued through appropriate payment nor have they accumulated any years of pensionable service, which is the reason this issue has to be addressed.

► **Accelerator 3: Efficient health care for all** implies fulfilling the basic internationally agreed human rights standards - the right to health. Considering the situation in BiH, the fulfilment of this accelerator is foreseen through several drivers, namely: improvement of access to and quality of health care services, preventive health measures, implementation of health care financing reforms, strategic approaches to retention of the existing staff and development of human resources in the health area in general.

► **Accelerator 4: Enhancing inclusiveness of education systems**, which will be implemented through the following drivers: equal access to education, establishment of a system of early detection and intervention for children at risk and children with developmental difficulties, increasing the coverage of children with pre-primary

education (ages 3 to 6 years), measures to reduce early school leaving, reducing the number of people without knowledge and skills and their integration into the labor market.

► **Accelerator 5: Financial inclusion of adult population** represents a prerequisite for enhancing social cohesion of individuals with the community, given that only every second adult inhabitant has an open bank account. The fulfilment of this accelerator is foreseen through the following drivers: improving accessibility of financial services to the most vulnerable groups of the population, and through better accessibility of micro loans with favorable interest rates.

For the purpose of monitoring the progress in implementing the development pathway of a society of equal opportunities, a set of 9 SDG indicators, along with 7 alternative indicators and 7 adjusted indicators, totaling 23 indicators, have been established.



Figure 7. Development pathways, accelerators and drivers

2.2.4. HORIZONTAL THEME: HUMAN CAPITAL FOR THE FUTURE

Acknowledging that robust human capital is crucial for achieving accelerated development, the Framework recognizes the importance of investing in and valuing human capital within the existing development pathways of smart growth, society of equal opportunities, and good governance and public sector management. Emphasizing human capital as a fundamental driver of development and implementing policies that enhance its growth can not only halt population outflows but also reverse current migration patterns.

2.2.5. HORIZONTAL THEME: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

In BiH, the concept of “Leave no one behind” was previously addressed through social inclusion and social protection measures. As a result, the accelerators and drivers within the three development pathways prioritize policies and actions aimed at addressing the needs of marginalized and excluded population segments through affirmative measures.

Implementing the “Leave No One Behind” principle requires effective management and accountability mechanisms at the local, state, and international levels. This entails implementing measures that track

progress in implementing this principle and ensuring steps are taken to achieve equality targets. The achievement of the SDGs hinges on addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable populations, preventing their exclusion from development processes, and ensuring they benefit from societal progress and improvements.

In this context, the Framework’s implementation considers the broader context of neglect and exclusion in BiH, including the regions where marginalized populations reside, as well as the causes and consequences of their exclusion. The goal is to enhance their societal standing and improve their overall position within society.

BiH is cognizant that the dignity and equality of all human beings are the foundation of the SDGs. Progress in the implementation of the SDGs and advancement in the realization of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political, and social – of all people across the country are interrelated.

The recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms constitute important guidance for BiH to improve the well-being of everyone in the country, including by preventing and addressing all forms of inequalities and discrimination and by enhancing the right to participation in public affairs.

In that context, the systematic collection of disaggregated data is essential to monitor and measure progress and address gaps, notably to leave no one behind, and much progress remains to be achieved in this area. Based on the present VNR and in line with its international human rights obligations, BiH will strengthen the collection and monitoring of human rights data as an accelerator of the SDGs and of the realization of all human rights for all.

An example of good practice: An e-course on the SDGs in BiH

To enhance accessibility and understanding of Agenda 2030 and the Framework in BiH, an e-learning program was created in 2021. This program specifically targets three key groups: civil servants and policymakers, the private sector, and students and university teachers. The primary objective of the e-course is to provide interactive and innovative training to these stakeholders, focusing on new trends and international best practices.

The e-learning program is designed in a modular format and consists of four self-paced learning modules tailored for civil servants and the private sector, as well as five self-paced learning modules for students.

These modules cover the conceptual framework of sustainable development and address specific aspects relevant to each target group within the context of BiH.

To ensure the course's effectiveness and relevance, representatives from all three target groups, including the Council, private sector representatives, and university teachers, actively participated in the development of the e-learning program. Their valuable perspectives and insights were incorporated into the course materials. Additionally, over 80 students from the University of Tuzla played a crucial role during the development and testing phases. Their engagement provided valuable feedback and perspectives, helping to improve the course content and further motivate students to engage with sustainable development issues.

After thorough consultation with relevant stakeholders, the e-learning programs were successfully integrated into the civil service training at both the state and entity levels, ensuring comprehensive training for civil servants. Additionally, e-courses targeting the private sector were seamlessly incorporated into the LMS² of the Chamber of Foreign Trade of BiH. Furthermore, several public and private universities across BiH have also integrated these e-courses into their respective LMS. This integration enables a wide range of individuals and organizations to access and benefit from educational content, fostering a culture of sustainable development across various sectors in BiH.

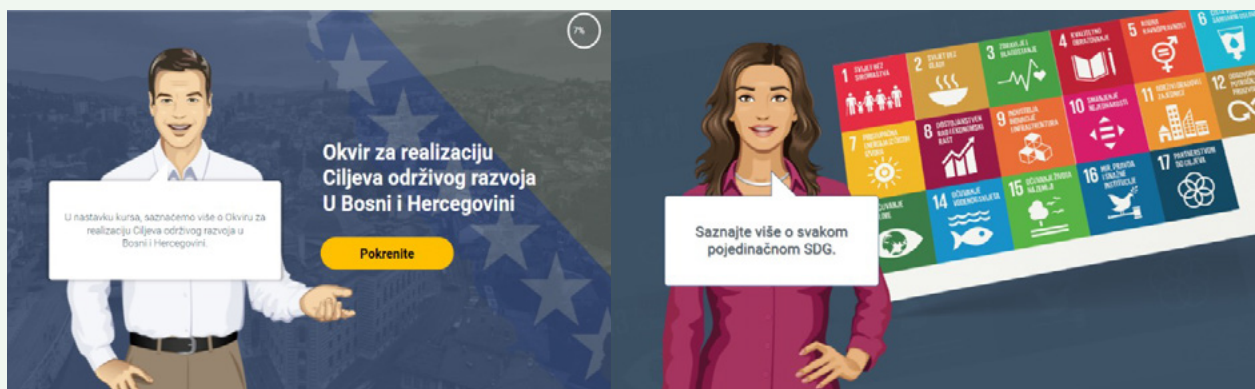


Figure 8. Programme for e-learning about the Framework and the Agenda 2030 implementation

2.3. INCORPORATING AGENDA 2030 INTO THE KEY STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

It is important to note that in the new planning cycle 2021–2027/2030³ the development strategies are aligned with the SDGs and for the first time linked to medium-term and annual institutional work plans and budgets, which affects the allocation of public resources for the SDGs. Below is an overview of the strategic documents, adopted at all levels of government, through which the Framework is operationalized.

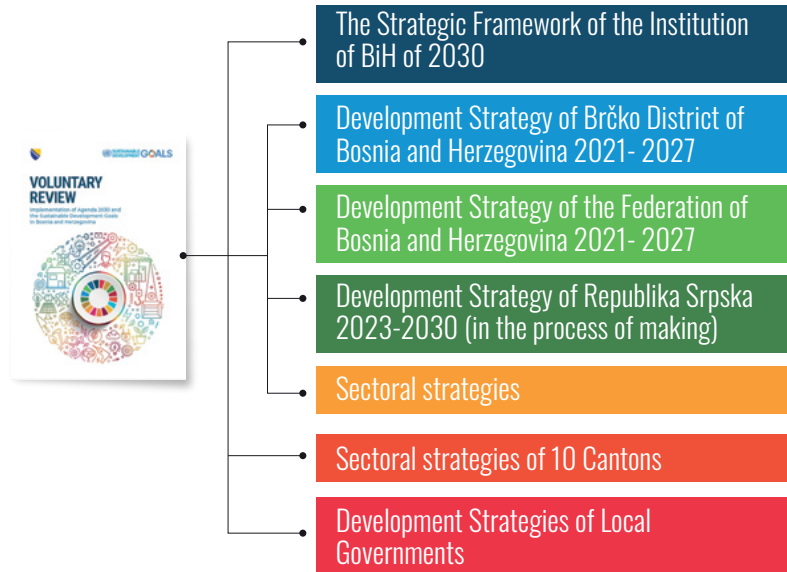


Figure 9. Strategic documents adopted at all levels of government

The effective implementation of strategic documents, including the Framework, relies on the formulation of three-year and annual work plans by institutions at all levels of government. These work plans are developed based on the strategic documents, incorporating the measures

outlined in the strategies into the operational plans of institutions. The three-year work plans serve as a foundation for the creation of a comprehensive framework budget document, while the annual work plans are instrumental in preparing the annual budgets of institutions. As a result, the development

objectives, priorities, measures, activities, and resource allocation at various levels of government align with the commitment to achieve the SDGs. This approach ensures coherence between the SDGs and public policies, while complying with budgetary planning and other financing sources.



Figure 10. The Framework implementation through various work plans of institutions at all levels of government

3 Under the new regulatory framework for the planning system, the planning cycle in BD BiH and FBIH covers the period 2021-2027. At the level of BiH and RS, the planning cycle covers the period until 2030.

2.4. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING

The key responsibility for the implementation of the SDGs through sustainable development strategies and policies lies with individual levels of government in BiH. The bodies responsible for strategic development planning and management have been established at each level of government. They carry out general coordination of development policies, that is, they coordinate the processes of the three-year and annual work plans of institutions based on strategic documents. These bodies oversee monitoring the results achieved at the level of activities and at the level of key development indicators.

To facilitate comprehensive monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Framework's implementation, the process of forming the Working Group responsible for overseeing the SDG implementation in BiH (referred to as the Council) has commenced. The Council consists of representatives from the institutions that were previously involved in the development of the Framework through the Working Group mentioned above. These institutions include:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH;
- Directorate for Economic Planning of BiH;
- Ministry for European Integration and International Cooperation of the RS;
- The Federation Institute for Development Programming;
- Department of Economic

Development, Sports and Culture, the BD BiH Government;

- The BD BiH Coordinator Office within the Council of Ministers of BiH.

The Council oversees overall monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Framework, coordination of the preparation of annual reports and voluntary national reporting to the UN. The implementation of the Framework is reported through:

- Annual reporting on the implementation of the Framework, prepared by the Directorate for Economic Planning of BiH with the support of the Council, and
- The Voluntary National Reviews presented to the High-Level Political Forum in New York (2023, 2027, 2030).

Practitioner networks in strategic development planning and management have proven to be highly effective mechanisms for enhancing coordination and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences in SDG implementation. In the FBiH, these networks consist of representatives

from cantonal development planning units responsible for drafting development documents in their respective cantons. The network members convene at least once a year to share experiences and improve the coordination of development policies at the cantonal level. The network of practitioners, and its members, played a crucial role in implementing the Law on Development Planning and Management of the FBiH and its accompanying regulations within the cantons. Under their guidance and oversight, all cantons developed their development strategies for the period until 2027, fully aligned with the SDGs.

Similarly, in RS, a practitioner network was established and played a significant role in the formulation and implementation of the regulatory framework for strategic planning. Additionally, networks of practitioners at the local government level were established within both the Associations of Municipalities and Cities in BiH. These networks fostered collaboration and cooperation among local government units in strategic planning initiatives.



Figure 11. A Practitioner Network meeting



Figure 12. Participants of the “Green Development” Conference

In addition to the executive branch, the legislative branch also plays a crucial role in implementing development policies, particularly in terms of enacting legislation, guiding government activities, and monitoring the progress of Agenda 2030 implementation.

In BiH, there is still a need for greater engagement of parliaments in these endeavors. One approach to strengthen the role of parliaments in monitoring and supporting the Framework’s implementation is to organize thematic sessions and establish parliamentary bodies dedicated to sustainable development. BiH is actively seeking to learn from countries that have successfully integrated their parliaments into the overall implementation of Agenda 2030, aiming to replicate their achievements.

Significant progress was made with the involvement of the Green Caucus of the BiH Parliament, working in collaboration with the Government and Assembly of BD BiH and receiving support from the German Development Agency (GIZ). In March 2023, they successfully organized a conference dedicated to green development, marking a visible milestone. The conference specifically emphasized crucial areas

such as energy transition and the reforms required for the broader Green Deal, focusing on energy, transportation, energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and urban mobility. These initiatives align closely with the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

Audit institutions play a vital role in enhancing the implementation process, and their involvement is crucial for driving improvements. In 2019, the first impact audit was conducted to assess the readiness of institutions at the BiH level to fulfill their commitments under Agenda 2030. This audit evaluated the actions taken to establish the necessary conditions for implementing the requirements of Agenda 2030, identifying areas that needed further attention in the future. In 2023, three audit institutions in BiH participated in the inaugural regional initiative, focusing on auditing the impacts of gender equality and the targets of SDG 5. This collaborative effort marked an important step towards ensuring accountability and promoting gender equality in the region.

2.5. THE MONITORING AND REPORTING SYSTEM

The Framework acknowledges the significance of 74 indicators specific to BiH, which have defined target values and serve as monitoring tools for the implementation of the Framework and the achievement of Agenda 2030.

The selection of indicators was guided by various criteria, with the primary criterion being the indicator’s ability to measure the progress of a particular development pathway and its international comparability. In cases where an indicator lacks international comparability due to inconsistent methodologies, adjusted indicators were established to ensure accurate measurement. Additionally, alternative indicators were introduced to better reflect the outcomes of specific drivers and accelerators within the relevant development pathway in BiH.

When determining the target values, consideration was given to the European integration process and the values associated with it. The targets aimed at reducing societal inequalities, bridging the gender gap, enhancing access to all levels of education (particularly pre-primary education), promoting preventive healthcare programs, and more. Consequently, target values were largely based on achieving the EU average or aligning with the goals set by EU member states in the region.

While preparing the VNR, the Council identified several challenges related to monitoring 74 indicators, namely:

1. Lack of data in the observed period. A survey such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), which is the source of data for some indicators, was not

conducted in the observed period; hence, their monitoring was not possible. In this case, those indicators were not analyzed due to outdated data since the last MICS was conducted in 2011/2012.

2. Change in the baseline value. In some cases, there was a change in the baseline values because of changes in the methodology, which called into question the set target value. In this case, the Table shows the indicator and its baseline value from the Framework which is equal to the value available at the time of writing the first Annual Report. In addition, the text also contains a description of the change in the baseline value, and the reason for the difference. The target values

were not changed as they had already been adopted.

With the assistance of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the project titled “Support for Integration of Human Rights Data Reporting into the SDG Planning Frameworks in BiH” was carried out to incorporate human rights data into the adopted Framework. This project aimed to enhance cooperation among relevant institutions responsible for monitoring human rights, statistical agencies and institutes, civil society organizations, and representatives of the Council. Three workshops were conducted between December 2021 and January 2022 to foster collaboration

and strengthen capacities for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs in BiH.

The project’s implementation led to the identification of additional indicators crucial for reporting on human rights issues, which have been included in the Voluntary Report. Through these efforts, data integration in the realm of human rights reporting aligns with the SDG Planning Frameworks in BiH, promoting a comprehensive approach to monitoring and addressing human rights concerns.



Figure 13. SDG portal

Using the open platform Open SDG, the Agency for Statistics of BiH created the SDG web portal (COR.bhas.gov.ba) which provides visualization of the UN global indicators for BiH. The portal enables harmonized and internationally comparable reporting under the SDG indicators, as well as better coordination with the UN agencies in charge of monitoring individual indicators. The Institute of Statistics of the RS and the Institute of Statistics of the FBiH also initiated the development of this platform. In addition, the Agency for Statistics of BiH and the Institute of Statistics of the RS prepare annual publications on sustainable development indicators.

An example of good practice: Digitalization and quality data on education for the purpose of policy making and international reporting on the achievement of SDG 4

To enhance institutional accountability for the attainment of all SDG 4 targets, statistical and educational institutions in BiH have worked collaboratively to establish robust and improved statistical information ecosystems in the education sector, adhering to international standards (EUROSTAT, UIS, OECD, UNCOR). This concerted effort has resulted in the development of reliable digital platforms, allowing educational institutions to report on their activities using internationally comparable indicators.

The implementation of these digital platforms enables informed policy-making and facilitates the allocation of resources in the education domain. By utilizing these platforms, policymakers can access accurate

and comprehensive data, which empowers them to make informed decisions and effectively allocate budgets to advance educational objectives in line with the SDG 4 targets.

2.5.2. THE ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN BIH

Following the adoption of the Framework in 2021, the first report on progress made in the implementation of the SDGs was prepared in 2022 by all levels of government and adopted by the Council of Ministers of BiH in 2023. The aim of the Report is to show the current level of implementation of Agenda 2030 in BiH and also to point out the bottlenecks, challenges and opportunities for the relevant institutions to accelerate progress. In this regard, the Report provides an overview of the Council's activities and describes the process of integrating the Framework into the development and sectoral strategic documents in BiH, as well as the progress made towards achieving individual targets.

2.5.3. VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM IN NEW YORK

The process of preparing the first Voluntary National Review was used to raise awareness of a wide range of stakeholders about Agenda 2030 and the forthcoming process of developing the SDG Framework in BiH. The "Imagine 2030" initiative,



Figure 14. VNR BiH 2019

launched in cooperation with the UN and with the support of Sweden, provided an opportunity for citizens across the country to participate in the creation of BiH's vision and development pathways by 2030.

On 16 July 2019, BiH submitted its inaugural Voluntary National Review (VNR), a comprehensive assessment of its progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. The VNR was a collaborative effort involving relevant institutions at all levels of government in BiH, in conjunction with various stakeholders. Significantly, BiH adopted an integrated approach throughout the preparation of both the initial VNR and the Framework. This integrated approach encompassed all dimensions of sustainable development, ensuring a holistic perspective in addressing the economic, social, and environmental aspects of the SDGs in BiH.

2.6. THE AGENDA 2030 LOCALIZATION IN BIH

After the presentation of the initial Voluntary Review in New York in July 2019 and the subsequent adoption and implementation of the Framework, it became evident that prioritizing efforts at the local level was essential for achieving significant progress. Local communities possess valuable firsthand knowledge about the daily experiences of their residents, including the presence and degree of vulnerability among marginalized groups within their regions. They are also aware of how improving services, infrastructure, and information sharing can help alleviate challenges faced by these groups, enabling them to enhance their quality of life and bridge the gap with other community members.

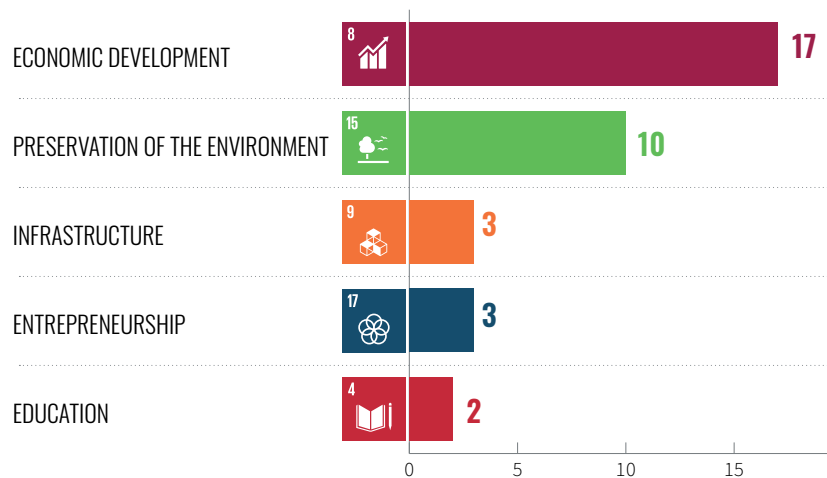
In light of this recognition, the Council initiated regional meetings with local government units to address the localization of the SDGs. This process has been successfully implemented in nearly one third of all local communities in BiH thus far. To facilitate the visits of Council members to local communities, municipalities and cities were requested to complete a specially designed questionnaire that provided initial insights into their progress in SDG implementation and integration into strategic documents. Guidelines were provided to representatives of local communities to assist them in delivering presentations on this topic. Furthermore, the involvement of stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and academic community was strongly encouraged. The visits also involved engaging in dialogues with prominent university centers across the country.

The concept of localizing the process was designed for municipalities to become better informed about the SDGs, to start defining and developing adequate projects that would result in significant progress in terms of an increased accessibility of all types of services to the most vulnerable groups of society and all the citizens, including digitalization, access to health services, adjusting educational institutions to the real needs of the public and private sectors, creating favorable business conditions for potential investors, especially start-ups, re-skilling etc. On the other hand, it was important for the Council members to learn about the specific problems faced by individual communities, raise their awareness about Agenda 2030, help the communities create closer links with other communities through exchange of best practices and lessons learned, encourage horizontal cooperation among the local communities in the country and their cooperation with the municipalities abroad with which they have twin town relationships

etc. A very important goal of these activities is to establish constant contact between the Council and representatives of the local communities for the purpose of increasing efficiency of the SDG implementation on the ground.

Gaining an understanding of the primary challenges and hindrances encountered by local communities in the pursuit of SDG implementation is crucial. This knowledge enables experts to offer valuable advice and support in formulating projects aligned with international standards, as well as assisting in securing the required funding for their execution. Through a comprehensive survey conducted in approximately one-third of the country's local communities, obstacles and bottlenecks hindering sustainable development have been identified. As a result, key priorities for sustainable development have been established, providing a foundation for targeted interventions and initiatives.

PRIORITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Graph 1: Priorities of local governments

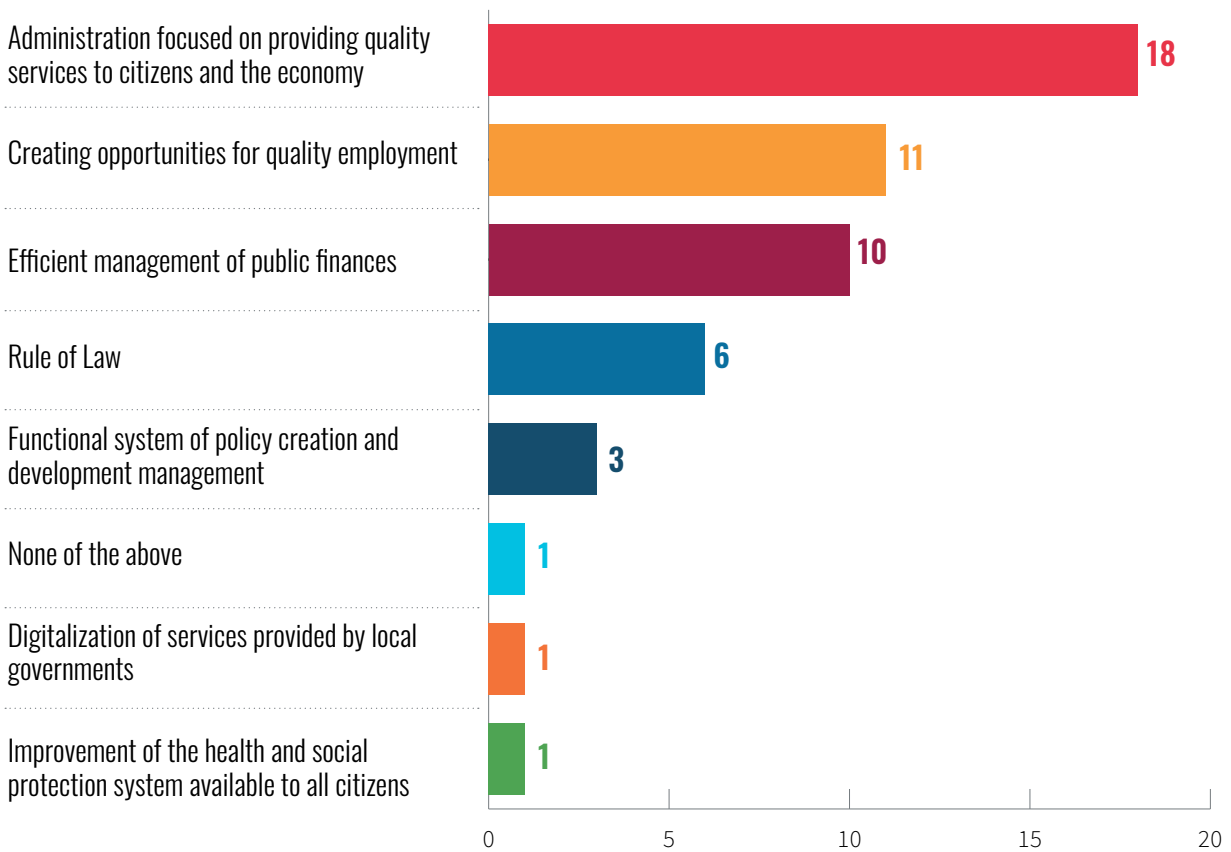
While education may not fall directly under the jurisdiction of municipalities, it is an essential duty for local communities to take a proactive role in enhancing education standards and conditions

for children and youth within their territories.

Municipalities are expected to serve as catalysts and champions in driving the improvement of education,

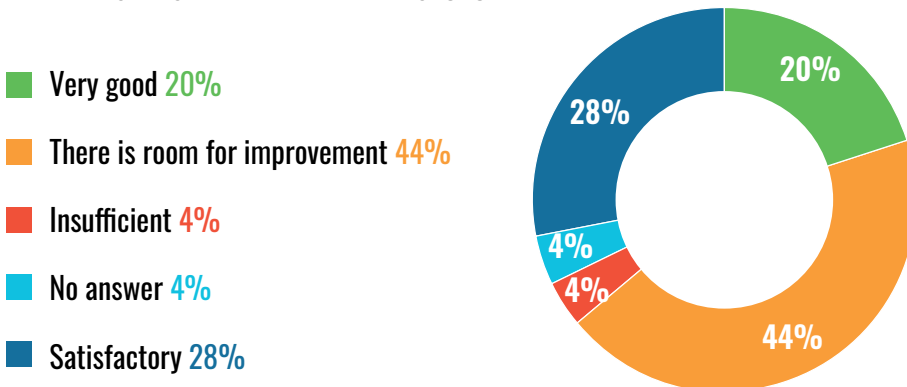
recognizing its vital importance and committing to its advancement for the benefit of their residents.

REQUIRED SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



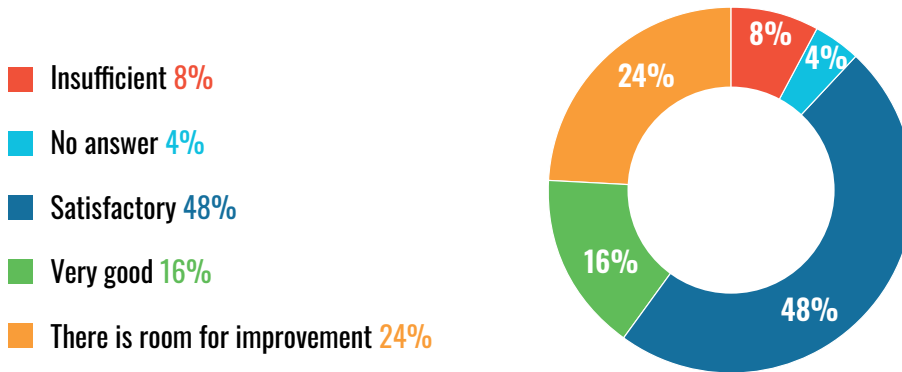
Graph 2. Required support for local government

PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR



Graph 3: Partnerships with the private sector

COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



Graph 4. Cooperation with civil society organizations

An example of good practice: The City of Bijeljina as a pioneer of sustainable development among the local communities in BiH

The City of Bijeljina has been actively promoting and localizing the SDGs for the past 6 years. Apart from introducing a systemic approach through alignment of the relevant

strategic documents with the SDGs and localization of global indicators, the City of Bijeljina is intensively implementing projects and activities in partnership with the civil society, private and public sectors, academia, and citizens.

One of the concrete examples of good practice is the establishment of the Innovation Center for Sustainable Development (InSDG), which was created on the basis of the results of youth and private

sector research. InSDG provides concrete support to the economy by strengthening their digital capacities and competitiveness on the market and supporting young people by providing them a working and creative space and helping them build new skills and network. The aim is to reduce the unemployment rate and youth emigration. The establishment of InSDG was funded from the city budget and all services are provided free of charge.



Figure 15. Sustainable Development Center Bijeljina

The strategic concept of the “Green Bijeljina” was developed in response to the needs of the citizens expressed through surveys. It is based on an integrated approach and aims at reducing CO2 emissions by providing support to heating system replacements, energy efficiency measures, greening of urban areas and the promotion of sustainable urban mobility through different forms of active mobility and environmental protection.

BiH actively promoted the localization of the Agenda 2030 implementation process in various international conferences and gatherings, garnering significant attention from participants. We shared our experiences in implementing the Agenda 2030 at meetings such as the Regional Forum in Geneva, where BiH had a co-chair, the Sustainable Development Transformation Forum in Seoul, the Global Workshop for the Voluntary National Reviews in Turin and Sofia, the Regional Western Balkan Conference on the SDGs, and the Conference on the SDG Implementation in the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative region, held in Banja Luka, among others. Bijeljina stands out as an early adopter of SDG implementation at the local level, and a comprehensive account of this exemplary practice is provided in the aforementioned good practice example.

2.6.1. THE CIVIL SOCIETY CONTRIBUTION TO THE AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION

Apart from government efforts, it is essential to acknowledge the significant role of civil society organizations in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. These organizations serve as crucial partners in promoting inclusivity, fostering participation, advocating for accountability, providing valuable knowledge and expertise, supporting capacity building, and enhancing cooperation between local and state levels.

In BiH, local communities have generally established effective collaborations with civil society organizations, employing various mechanisms to engage them in policy creation, implementation, and monitoring. These mechanisms include forums for local communities, development partner groups, and other platforms that facilitate the participation of civil society organizations. Moreover, support for projects and initiatives led by civil society organizations is well-structured in many local government units, following a standardized methodology for the transparent selection of projects financed by public funds. Projects are chosen based on their quality and potential to address the challenges faced by local communities, particularly in improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable population groups, such as those in social need or older individuals.

The involvement of civil society organizations in the drafting process of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) highlighted their invaluable role in assessing progress and contributing to the implementation of Agenda 2030. However, these organizations face challenges due to insufficient human and financial resources required for local project implementation. Additionally, the fragmentation of civil society organizations, lack of adequate registries, and weak networking pose further obstacles.

Through consultations, it was evident that volunteering plays a crucial role in both community development and the personal growth of volunteers. Volunteering brings people together, enhances social skills, expands networks, and contributes to the well-being of the community. While the percentage of young people engaged in volunteer activities in BiH has increased to 13.8%, it remains lower than the EU average of 25%. Although the Law on Associations and Foundations recognizes the significance of volunteering, there is still room for improvement through the development of policies that support and facilitate volunteering initiatives.

Volunteerism in BiH has made significant contributions to the achievement of multiple SDGs such as Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, and Partnerships. Key organizations like the Red Cross, Proni, Jadar, Viktorija, CURE Foundation, Women's Network, and the Youth Communication Center (YCC) have played vital roles in promoting volunteerism and making meaningful contributions towards various SDGs in the country. Their initiatives, along with other notable practices, encompass youth development, healthcare services for refugees and migrants, raising awareness about health issues and blood donation, advocating for feminist values, promoting healthy lifestyles, combating peer violence, and establishing volunteer centers in different cities.

2.6.2. THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGs

Young people, as the key asset of every society, are involved in the process of creating this VNR and the SDG implementation in our country. In March 2023, a survey was conducted through the [UNICEF U-Report](#) portal for the purpose of gathering information on the views, priorities and levels of engagement of young people in the sustainable development processes in BiH. The results of the survey indicate the need to further raise youth awareness about the Agenda 2030, where social networks have proved to be the most effective communication channel.⁴

The young respondents believe that three priorities are important for improving the position of young people in the country:

- SDG 1 - No poverty (31% marked the responses as a priority),
- SDG 3 – Healthy life and well-being of all people of all age groups (19% marked the responses as a priority), and
- SDG 4 - Inclusive, equal, and quality education (17% marked the responses as a priority), which implies that young people consider the basic assumptions in society, such as health and education as priorities that should be addressed in order to improve the position of young people in the country.

4

The survey sample is 1,241 young people aged 18-35. Most of respondents live in the FBiH (72%), followed by the RS (24%), and the BD BiH (4%)

YOUNG PEOPLE CONSIDER THAT THERE ARE THREE PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE THE POSITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY:



Graph 5. Priorities of young people

A relatively high percentage of the marked responses set SDG 8 - Decent work and sustainable economic growth - as a priority (13% marked responses as a priority).

The results of the survey are particularly important for policy makers in BiH as an increasing number of young people are leaving the country. In addition, this information indicates that it is still necessary to inform young people about the efforts of institutions in BiH to achieve Agenda 2030 and to engage them in policy-making processes at all levels of government. Less than 10% of marked responses identified as priorities SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 7, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 13, and SDG 16, while no priority was

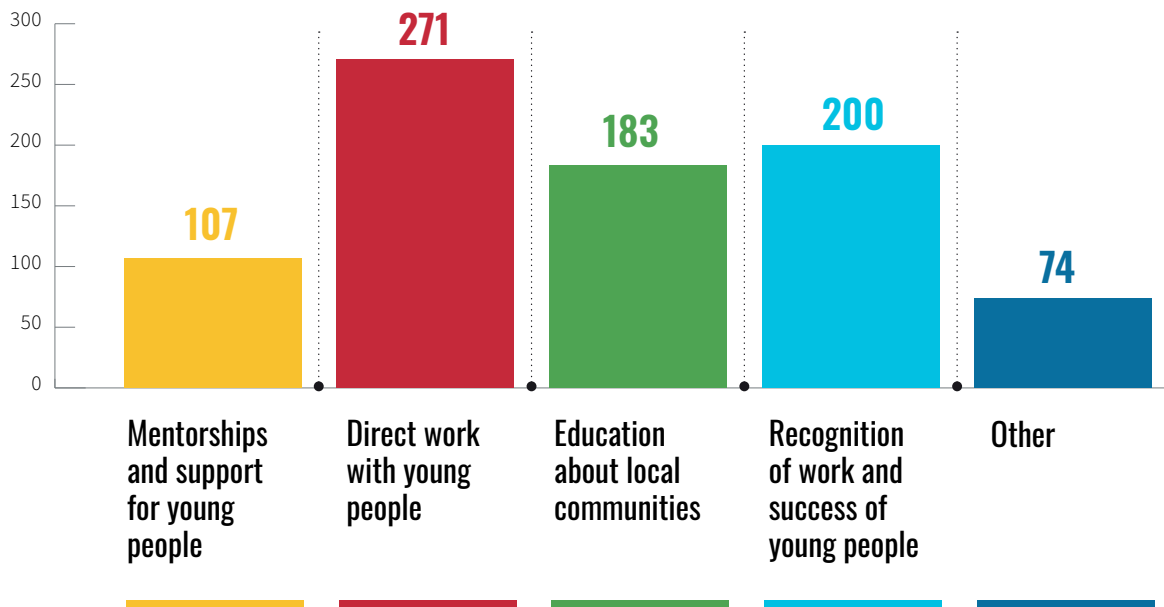
identified for SDG 6, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 15, and SDG 17.

When asked about the ways to increase youth interest in community development and the SDG implementation, the most common response was direct work with the youth, including seminars, workshops, and round tables, for the purpose of raising youth awareness (30.2%).

At the same time, the potential of young people is not sufficiently galvanized to strengthen the development of the local community. This issue was highlighted during the workshops organized within the process of preparing this VNR, and the above-mentioned U-report survey showed that the

majority of young people (63%) are not active in the development of their local communities. Of the respondents who are active in their local communities, the majority mentioned volunteering in non-governmental organizations (30.4%), followed by other forms of participation in the local community (27.4%) and volunteering in local development actions (17.1%). Participation in informal youth groups and political parties received 12.4% and 11.8% of responses respectively, while participation in the work of youth councils was indicated by only 2.4% respondents.

HOW TO MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?



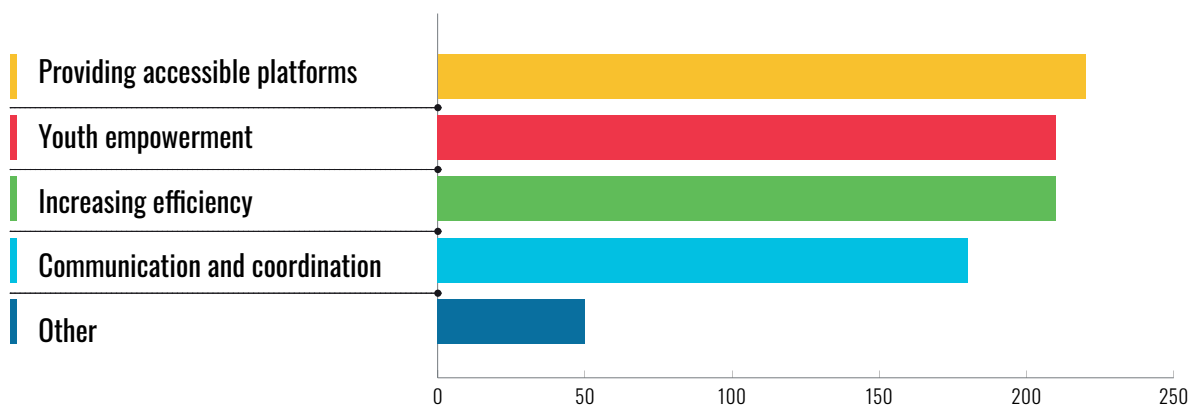
Graph 6: Motivating young people to engage in local community development

The results show that 89% respondents believe that digitalization and technology are the key to an increased engagement of young people in the local community development

When asked how digitalization and the use of technology can improve the participation of young people in the local community, the majority of respondents chose providing accessible platforms (25%), followed by increasing efficiency and reducing

administrative burdens (24%) and empowering young people with the tools and resources for activities in the local community (courses, lectures 24%).

HOW TO USE DIGITALIZATION FOR GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?



Graph 7: Inclusion of young people in the local community development through digitalization

An example of good practice: The RS youth policy

During the current and previous Youth Policy (2016-2020), significant programs were implemented in the RS to support young people, including:

- The support program for employing young senior expert associates as interns, which resulted in the employment of 2,369 individuals between 2016 and 2020.

- The Young Entrepreneurs Incentive Program, known as StartUp Srpska, aimed at young people below 35 years of age. This program led to the employment of 251 individuals.
- The RS Investment and Development Bank approved 1,977 loan applications, granting a total of BAM 160 million in housing loans. Additionally, the RS Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sports approved 1,574 applications for interest rate subsidies on housing loans for young people and young

married couples.

- Through agriculture programs, a total of 2,979 beneficiaries under the age of 40 received capital investment incentives, and 18 young agronomists found employment or established their own businesses in rural areas.

These initiatives played a crucial role in supporting young people in the RS and promoting their economic opportunities and development.

2.6.3. COOPERATION WITH THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

The Council members engaged in multiple meetings with representatives of the academic community during the SDG localization sessions. Additionally, several sessions were conducted with the Academies of Sciences in BiH. Collaborative efforts with institutions such as the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology (SSST), the School of Economics at the University of Sarajevo, and other public universities in BiH led to the organization of discussions on “The Future of Education: Universities 4.0”. These sessions provided a platform for young people and students to engage in dialogue, exploring



Figure 16. A meeting of the Council and BHAAS in Sarajevo

innovative approaches and tools that education should adopt to foster sustainable lifestyles and employment opportunities.

“BHAAS Days,” organized by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian-American Academy of Arts and Sciences (BHAAS), were held on June 23- 26, 2022 in Sarajevo, where one of the key panel discussions was dedicated to sustainable development. All scientific papers presented during the discussions were related to the relevant SDGs.

The project proposed by BiH at the Third Meeting of the SEE2030 Monitoring Committee, held in Istanbul on March 7, 2023, was the SEE SDGs Academic Research Award, where annual awards would be presented to scientists, researchers and institutions for the best innovations related to the SDGs and contributing to their faster achievement in the region of Southeast Europe.

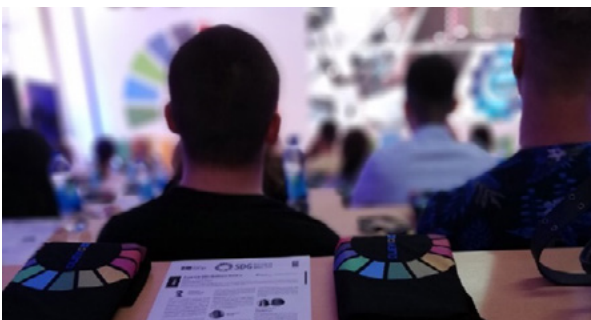


Figure 17. The SDG Business Week in BiH, 2019



Figure 18. The SDG Week in BiH, 2021

An example of good practice: Pilot green roofs in Banja Luka

The “Circular Economy in Water Management” project of the Brno University of Technology (AdMaS science center) and the Faculty of Agriculture in Banja Luka indicates the importance of technical solutions in water management in terms of water efficiency and

conservation, wastewater treatment and reuse, collection of rainwater and the use of treated wastewater. The goal of this approach is to create a closed circular system where water is seen as a precious resource the use of which is optimized, while protecting the natural environment. One way to manage water runoff in the cities is to build green roofs. Green roofs are useful for reducing the air temperature in urban areas,

in reducing rainwater runoff which leads to a reduction in the load on sewage systems, purifying rainwater (with biochar), which contributes to improving water quality, reducing CO₂ levels, cleaner air and increasing biodiversity. The project should serve as an example for the participation of institutions in urban areas starting from the second half of 2023.



Figure 19. Experimental green roofs in Banja Luka

3. FINANCING THE AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION IN BiH

The Framework acknowledges the importance of utilizing domestic public finance effectively to tackle pressing development priorities and provides guidance for strategic planning processes across all government levels in BiH. In the new planning cycle of 2021-2027/2030, strategic documents serve as the foundation for mid-term and annual planning of institutional activities, which in turn informs the formulation of three-year and annual budgets. It is crucial to establish connections between existing public financing mechanisms and SDG-oriented strategies and policies to ensure alignment and coherence.

Public revenues are one of the key sources of financing sustainable development policies, and there is room for additional focus on areas that can accelerate the achievement of a positive change. In addition to the need for targeting public funds towards the SDGs, the authorities at all levels in BiH have recognized the need to mobilize broad development partnerships with other actors, such as the private sector, international and domestic financial institutions, and to introduce additional innovative ways of financing in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and support the development effect.

Guided by this paradigm, at the end of 2020, the authorities in BiH, supported by the UN - the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, launched the process of drafting a Strategic Financing Framework for Agenda 2030. The goal of that process was to propose, on the basis of a comprehensive development finance assessment in BiH and the SDG financing gap in the priority areas, ways for the better channeling of public funds to sustainable development. In addition, the goal was to propose ways of mobilizing external sources of financing through the strengthening of incentive policies and the introduction of new and innovative financing instruments. The process took place within the Working Group for SDG Financing, which brought together representatives of the Finance Ministries at the level of BiH, entities and the BD BiH, the Council, representatives of line ministries and a number of domestic and international experts.

The first part of the process referred to the comprehensive assessment of development finance scope, types, and structure (within the macroeconomic and fiscal context), including an estimation of the SDG financing cost in the period 2022-2030. According to the analysis, if BiH maintains the current trend in GDP

growth rates and does not increase the percentage share of the SDG financing expenditure in GDP, it will not achieve a significant acceleration of sustainable development by 2030. If BiH applies the scenario of increasing SDG spending at a level where it would keep pace with upper middle-income countries, an additional 6.2 billion BAM will be needed for the period 2023-2030 or 800 million BAM per year, which would be enough to significantly accelerate the achievement of the set targets by 2030. These funds can be further mobilized through the creation and application of new financing mechanisms and instruments for targeted support to SDG financing in BiH.

As part of the development finance assessment, an analysis was carried out of potential priority sectors which have a significant catalytic potential to contribute to an accelerated SDG achievement as well as to the expansion of the fiscal space, which would make it possible to finance the achievement of the SDGs in other areas. A special focus was placed on the analysis of the priority sectors found to have a potential to mobilize funds from external sources through specific financing mechanisms and instruments. When selecting priority sectors, special attention was given to the criteria

that ensured the relevance of the sectors for development priorities in the country and the potential for increasing the fiscal space.⁵ Three priority areas were proposed on the basis of the above criteria. They are further elaborated in the Road Map which serves as a basis in the ongoing process of developing the BiH SDG Financing Framework by 2030:

- Energy and infrastructure (decarbonization);
- Digitalization;
- Research and development.

Digitalization permeates most of the accelerators within the development pathway Smart Growth, and is directly linked to SDG 9 (building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and encouraging innovation), while it is also mentioned in the targets related to climate change (SDGs 13, 14 and 15), private sector development (SDG 8), education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3). The primary financial instruments to be mobilized for the implementation of various digitalization measures are the public budgets and official development assistance (i.e. EU IPA III), syndicated loans, tax and non-tax incentives, private capital, social impact bonds, SDG bonds, guarantees, risk capital funds, Apex financing for SMEs, capital microfinance and crowdfunding.

Investments in infrastructure and energy are key to achieving the SDGs from accelerators 1, 2 and 4 within the Smart Growth pathway. This priority area contributes to achieving five targets: road safety (target 3.6); energy efficiency (target 7.3); sustainable infrastructure (target 9.1), access to public transport (target 11.2) and fossil fuel subsidies (target 12.c). The primary financial instruments for financing the SDGs in this area would be the budgets of public sector enterprises, public guarantees, the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF), bonds, syndicated loans, ODA catalytic financing and various types of insurance, including EU pre-accession funds and credit lines.

Research and development will directly or indirectly affect most of the SDGs. The financing of research and development will have an impact on the economy, innovation, and infrastructure (SDG 9), sustainable cities (SDG 11), gender (SDG 5), health and well-being (SDG 3), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and climate action (SDG 13). Public investment in research and development will have to increase to at least 1% of GDP by 2030, which requires strengthening the capacity for public financing of research and its structured financing instruments. It is possible to mobilize private financing (including SME financing) for research and development through research and development tax credits, while the EU institutions can be engaged through technical assistance to support the process.

Furthermore, the Road Map outlines various policies, regulations, and standards that must be established to lay the foundation for substantial advancements in priority sectors and other development areas. Examples of these include initiatives such as “greening the banking system” and the formulation of a road map for the development of capital and financial markets. These measures are essential in creating the necessary conditions for progress and achieving development priorities.

⁵ Contribution to one or more SDGs which are of particular importance to the country; compliance with the Framework; implementability at all levels of government; the potential to attract private capital through the adjustment of existing or introduction of new financial instruments; ability to demonstrate quick and visible results; contribution to the European integration process and priorities from the Economic Reform Programme; contribution to horizontal issues, such as gender equality, climate change and the environment; contribution to fulfilling the “leave no one behind” and “build back better” principles.

4. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing the private sector's catalytic and transformational role in achieving the SDGs, the process of sensitization and engagement of the private sector continued through capacity building and the organization of significant activities: the annual SDG Business Pioneers Award and the SDG Business Week/ Sustainable Development Week in BiH, which attract attention of a large number of stakeholders.

With the adoption of the Framework for BiH in 2021, the SDG Business Week was renamed to the Sustainable Development Week. The goal of this event is to raise awareness and engage the interested public in discussions about new trends in the SDG management and localization, encouragement of decarbonization, innovation and smart economic growth, and ultimately contributing to the creation of a society of equal opportunities.

Four annual SDG Business Pioneers Award generations have been organized in order to highlight the importance of the contribution of private businesses to achieving the SDGs and introducing sustainable business models. The award application method follows the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) reporting standards, enabling more than 50 BiH companies to publish their first annual sustainability reports as a result of the process.



Figure 20. Light up SDG across the Parliamentary Assembly building

An example of good practice: Declaration of Sustainable Development / SDG Business Mentors

The SDG Business Pioneers Award attracts great interest from the BiH companies every year. Within this activity, in 2021, 13 BiH companies that had won the award signed the Declaration of Sustainable Development as a guide for their future business operations. Interestingly, women account for more than 50% of management structures in those companies.



Figure 21. Signatories of the Pledge of Sustainable Development

The SDG Business Mentor Programme was launched in 2022 within the SDG Business Pioneers Award. Business mentors are selected from among the companies which have repeatedly won the award and have proven their expertise in this field. In 2022, the first business mentors were the Ministry of Programming (thematic area: People / Creating Quality Jobs / Talent Retention) and Kakanj Heidelberg Metals (thematic area: Resources and Environment / Decarbonization / Optimizing Business Models). One of the first activities of business mentors is to work directly with interested companies on improving their business models, with a focus on creating quality jobs as well as reducing the negative impact on the environment.

The interest and willingness of private capital owners to pilot innovative approaches and apply innovations in existing business models are visible.



#SDGWeekinBiH #SedmicaOdrzivogRazvoja

SDG Business Mentor Session

Figure 22. Meeting of sustainable development business mentors



Figure 23. Jaffa commerce



Figure 24. Solar panels of IMACO Systemtechnik

The SDG Accelerator for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) was launched in March 2020 with the aim of accelerating innovation and growth of SMEs in BiH through the development of new sustainable business solutions with concrete business potential and a positive impact on the SDGs.⁶ The companies in the SDG Accelerator in BiH went through a 6-month innovation journey, with a focus on quick ideas with strong SDG and business potential, identification of new products, services or business models and concrete business plans at the end of prototype development. Through this pilot program, a whole range of sustainable models and products was expanded in the agriculture and rural tourism sector (production optimization project and linking agriculture and

rural tourism), the food production sector (new business models in tea production), the information technology sector (innovations in business model and development of new IT-based SDG solutions), and in the textile sector (production and supply chain optimization project in the production of leather clothing).

The “Challenge of Decarbonization of SMEs” project was launched in March 2021 for all interested parties that aim of recovering as best as possible from the COVID-19 pandemic and establishing sustainable approaches to future business operations, including the piloting of specific short-term interventions that would contribute to decarbonization of their business operations.

The goal of this activity was to promote a series of concrete actions and innovative solutions with SMEs in BiH in order to contribute to the sustainable and green recovery. The activities included support for pioneer companies in reducing their energy intensity, encouraging the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, control of greenhouse gas emissions as well as the control of emissions of pollutants into the air. For example, the company IMACO Systemtechnik reduced its annual carbon footprint by 125 tons of CO₂ through the installation of solar panels.

⁶ UNDP in Denmark completed two generations of this programme and provided knowledge and consultations to UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina for successful implementation of this activity - <http://www.sdg-accelerator.org/content/sdg-accelerator/en/home/>.

5. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the economy and society throughout BiH. Additional challenges in achieving the SDGs are caused by the conflict in Ukraine and the global rise in food and energy prices. The economic activity recorded a 3% decrease in BiH GDP in 2020, a 7.4% increase in 2021 and a 2.4% increase in 2022.⁷ According to the Social Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in BiH, the strong shock waves of these crises caused greater poverty and food deprivation and exacerbated inequalities, especially among those who were already at risk and who lived below the poverty line.⁸ Furthermore, monetary-fiscal measures for post-pandemic recovery and disruptions in the supply chains of goods and services led to an increase in inflation. This

situation is further fueled by the labor shortage, which is particularly visible in industries, such as construction or tourism.

The crises experienced in BiH have had a notable influence on the progress made towards attaining the SDGs. This section examines the advancements made by BiH in working towards the SDGs, with particular emphasis on the prioritized targets outlined in the Framework. It also highlights the challenges faced and showcases noteworthy practices that have emerged.

The tables below provide in the report showcase the prioritized targets for each SDG as outlined in the Framework. It also includes a detailed description of the progress made towards achieving the

corresponding SDGs for the year 2023. The descriptions for each SDG are accompanied by arrows depicted in three different colors: red, orange, and green. The red color signifies that the target value will not be attained, even if the indicator shows improvement. The orange color indicates that the target value for 2023 could be achieved with additional minor policy interventions. On the other hand, the green color signifies that the target value has already been achieved or will be achieved based on the pace of improvement indicated by the indicator. The Annex contains the baseline and final available values, as well as the target values for 2023 and 2030.

⁷ IMF World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023.

⁸ <https://www.undp.org/bosnia-herzegovina/publications/3rd-social-impact-assessment-covid-19-bosnia-and-herzegovina>



SDG 1. END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

The latest available data show that around 18% of the population lives below the relative poverty line, and 30% is at risk of poverty.⁹ If the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the crisis in Ukraine are taken into account, the assumption is that the situation is even worse. The Social Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in BiH indicates that the economic impact of the crisis disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population of BiH, where the poor are pushed deeper into poverty and large parts of the middle-class face material deprivation. The crisis caused a decrease in income and access to basic services, leading to an increase

in multidimensional poverty and inequality.¹⁰

The Human Development Report 2021 points to significant challenges facing the social protection system in BiH, among which are the aging of the population, emigration of the working-age population, the low rate of economic activity among women and the high prevalence of the informal economy. Territorial inequality is also noted, given that access to and extent of social protection are different in different parts of the country. Social benefits are mostly insufficient for the basic needs of life, although they have been growing in recent years.

Last year, the authorities in BiH adopted a number of measures in the form of legal arrangements aimed at reducing poverty and mitigating the gender pay gap. Thus, several important measures have been introduced in the RS, BD BiH and FBiH, which include access to a maternity allowance

by all unemployed mothers, as well as a measure of support for an unemployed parent of four or more children, which stipulates that the parent who decides to care for the children is entitled to a salary in the amount of approximately 80% of the average salary in the RS. In BD BiH, the child benefit coverage has been extended to all children without one or both parents, as well as to the families with children with disabilities and parents with severe disabilities. In FBiH, the Law on Parent Carers was adopted, which stipulates that parents who care exclusively for their children receive the lowest monthly salary and have pension insurance contribution paid. Also, the rights and the scope of rights of the beneficiaries have been expanded throughout BiH to individuals who have health problems and are currently or permanently unable to work in the form of cash assistance and personal or family income.

Target: To eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 1.1.1: Poverty rate, international poverty line		N/A
Alternative SDG indicator: Poverty rate at the level of the state/entity		N/A
Target 1.4. By 2030 ensure that all men and women, particularly the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership, and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services, including microfinance		
SDG indicator 1.4.1. a: Access to basic services, in % (1.4.1.a Water supply)		N/A
SDG indicator 1.4.1. b: Access to basic services, in % (1.4.1.b Sanitation services)		N/A

⁹ <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2021-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi#/indicies/MPI>

¹⁰ <https://www.undp.org/bs/bosnia-herzegovina/publications/procjena-posljedica-covid-19-na-dru%C5%A1tvo-u-bosni-i-hercegovini-tre%C4%87e-anketno-istra%C5%BEivanje>

In BiH, the Roma population is among the most vulnerable groups across various sectors of society, including health, labor market, education, and political participation. During the period of 2019-2023, several projects aimed at supporting the Roma population were carried out with the assistance of grant funds from the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in BiH. In terms of housing, 25 housing

units were constructed and 55 were rehabilitated, benefiting 365 Roma families. Additionally, infrastructure projects were implemented, providing improvements for the living conditions of these families. Employment opportunities were created for 106 Roma individuals, and 407 Roma people received access to preventive medical examinations. In the field of healthcare, 175 mediators were trained, enabling the provision

of 1,120 preventive examinations, and 200 individuals were covered by voluntary insurance. With regards to Roma education, in 2020, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in BiH allocated a grant from its budget to support projects aimed at enhancing the education of the Roma community.



SDG 2. END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

According to the indicators of the Agency for Statistics of BiH in 2021, 5% of GDP is made up of agriculture, forestry, and fishing, while food production makes up 1.8% of GDP. In terms of foreign trade exchange of agricultural products in 2021, imports were almost four times as high as exports. Of the total number of employees, 2.5% are employed in the agricultural sector (2021 average). Informal employment is also high: according to the ILO methodology, that percentage in 2021 was 9.5%. Although BiH has significant potential for the development of the agricultural sector, there are also problems of a structural nature that slow down the development of this sector (transport infrastructure,

fragmentation of agricultural land into smaller plots, etc.).

The pilot census of agriculture commenced in October 2022, encompassing a total of 15,887 farms and households. This initiative involves the collection of data pertaining to various aspects of agriculture, including the geographical distribution of agricultural farms, the utilization of agricultural land for different types of crops, the number of livestock categorized by species, rural indicators, workforce information, ecological farming practices, irrigation methods, agro-environmental indicators, and agricultural production techniques, among others. The purpose of this census is to gather comprehensive and accurate data related to the agricultural sector.

The upcoming comprehensive agriculture census, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2023, holds great significance as a vital statistical survey. This census is particularly noteworthy as it will provide high-quality data for analyzing the current state and potential of the agricultural

and rural sectors. Furthermore, it will serve as a foundation for strategic planning of their development across all levels of organization. Conducting a full agriculture census in compliance with international statistical standards is also of paramount importance, as it fulfills a key obligation in the Stabilization and Association Process. This achievement will contribute to facilitating BiH's progress toward European Union membership.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine have caused disruptions in the food supply in BiH, which has been further aggravated by occasional droughts and floods in the country. The rise in food and energy prices has significantly worsened the financial situation of households, where vulnerable groups are the hardest hit. In 2022, the rise in prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages amounted to 21.5%, compared to 2021, while prices from the "electricity, gas and other energy sources" category increased by 16.5%. Research shows that citizens resort to different methods of meeting the basic needs

of life, from borrowing to turning to agricultural production.¹¹

In order to facilitate transport in the novel situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts were made to create a list of vital products and a list of cargo truck border crossings, as well as of possible trade measures that will improve the flow of goods and ensure the market food supply. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH, in cooperation with the entity-level ministries responsible for trade and the relevant services in BD BiH, created a priority list of the necessary goods to be released through the priority-truck Green Lanes at certain border crossings between CEFTA countries, which accelerated transit of goods in the new situation.

In the FBiH, the financial support programme is implemented through the programmes of plant and animal production, rural development and other forms of financial support. In 2021, farmers in the FBiH were granted 86.2 million BAM as part of the aforementioned support

programmes, and for 2023, a record-high 164 million BAM budget for support to farmers was adopted. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the FBiH Government allocated 8.2 million BAM in financial assistance to export-oriented companies, cooperatives, trades and other legal entities in the agriculture and food sector.

In terms of strategic documents pertaining to agriculture and rural development, the agriculture and rural development strategies for the period 2021-2027 have been adopted in the RS and BD. Meanwhile, in the FBiH, the strategic document is currently undergoing the adoption process. These strategies outline the long-term plans and priorities for promoting and enhancing the agricultural and rural sectors in their respective regions.

The goal of developing the aforementioned strategies is to increase agricultural production on a sustainable basis, improve the conformity of the production structure, increase the processing of agricultural products and


advance the more harmonious rural development.

The intersectoral priorities include the fight against climate change, gender equality and improvement of the position of rural women, poverty reduction and caring for the elderly.


In 2021, a total of BAM 75 million was allocated from the Agrarian Budget in the RS, of which 73% of the total amount was spent on plant and animal production, 18% on rural development, and 9% on systemic and other measures. A total of around 13 million BAM was allocated from the Compensation Fund. In 2021, around 16 million BAM was paid out in agricultural incentives in the BD BiH.

In 2022, a new measure was introduced that was related to the support for self-employment of rural women, while this measure has been in force in the BD BiH since 2019.

Target 2.1: By 2030 end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 2.1.2: Food insecurity in adult population, %		As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis in food supply, there is a deterioration in the value of indicators in BiH. The data for the year 2020 (12.9%) indicates a departure from the target, which is 5% for 2023.

Target 2.2: By 2030 end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving internationally agreed targets by 2025 relating to stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 2.2.1: Proportion of children moderately or seriously stunted		Although the proportion of children moderately or seriously stunted is decreasing, despite disruptions in food supply on the global market, the value for 2020 (9.1%) indicates that the target value (5%) for 2023 will not be reached. It is important to note that most children are moderately, not severely stunted, and that there is a higher prevalence of obesity in children.

ACCESS TO FOOD BY THE MOST VULNERABLE

From October 2022 to February 2023, UNDP conducted a mapping of all soup kitchens in BiH in terms of spatial distribution, capacity, number of beneficiaries and other important aspects of their work, with the aim of developing concrete recommendations for public policies and technical measures that

contribute to reducing hunger in the country. The conducted research showed that there are currently 53 organizations in BiH that distribute free meals, with 34 facilities located in the FBiH, 18 facilities in the RS and one facility in the BD BiH. The largest number of facilities are managed by humanitarian/non-profit organizations in BiH. The current number of beneficiaries in 53 soup kitchens in BiH is close to 18,000. The

most vulnerable groups of society among the beneficiaries of soup kitchens include pensioners, the unemployed, single parents, people with developmental disabilities, and members of the Roma population.

An example of good practice: EU4AGRI

The implementation of the EU4AGRI project began in BiH in mid-2020. By the end of 2024, EU4AGRI will invest over 20 million EUR in the agriculture and food sector in BiH, strengthening the companies for a strong domestic economy and the institutions for successful management of EU funds. EU4Agri support makes a key contribution to the BiH sustainable agriculture through the development of key policies and strategies (e.g., the FBiH Agricultural Development Strategy), strengthening agricultural

advisory services and harmonization of the BiH policies with the EU acquis. The fundamental activities were initiated towards developing the Strategic Plan for Rural Development of BiH 2022-2027, the Strategy of Agricultural and Rural Development of the FBiH 2021-2027, the Law on the Regulation of the Wine Market in BiH, the Rulebook on Viticulture and Wine Register, as prerequisites for better integration of the BiH agricultural and food sector into the European Union. In addition, EU4AGRI provided significant technical support to the functional analysis of three entity-level ministries, the development of

an agricultural forecasting system, the Business Planning Academy for access to EU funds through which 61 advisors were trained to support access to EU funds, and the creation of a digital platform for access to EU funds in BiH. 91 investment projects were supported with 11.7 million EUR, benefiting more than 971 beneficiaries. With the continuous development of BiH agriculture, EU4AGRI also addresses major strategic, scientific, and technological challenges by driving innovation in the agricultural sector.



Figure 26. Konjević polje, EU4AGRI beneficiary, "Agrofood", Senad Omerović



Figure 25. Worker employed through EU4B project, eco cheese Pudja. He is also an EU4AGRI beneficiary



SDG 3. ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

The enjoyment of the highest possible standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. The issue of health goes largely beyond the health sector because its main determinants (age, sex, and inheritance) are related to living conditions, environmental factors, lifestyles, socio-economic factors, factors related to upbringing, education, and culture, as well as the functioning of the health and social protection systems.



Promotion of a healthy life and well-being of people of all ages, while enjoying high standards of health, are important in BiH. Life expectancy at birth was 79 years for women and 74 years for men in 2019, and an increasing trend has

been recorded¹². According to the latest available data on household budget, 98% of individuals were covered by public and 1% by private insurance.¹³ According to the same survey, it is estimated that 1% of the population does not have health insurance. However, during the state of emergency/natural disaster, all levels of government adopted temporary universal health care measures related to COVID-19.

Regarding health expenditure, the costs are increasing year by year, and according to the latest data, they make up 9% of GDP.¹⁴ The continuous increase in expenditures can be partly explained by population aging, and the fact that treatment is becoming “more expensive” with the introduction of new technologies and a broader range of laboratory findings. The services of long-term care, preventive healthcare and health administration are almost exclusively financed from public expenditures, while medical resources for outpatients are financed largely from private

expenditures, that is, from direct household expenditures. In BiH, the largest portion of funds is allocated for the inpatient treatment and outpatient care devices.

In BiH, the under-five mortality rate and the infant mortality rate are at the level of the European Union average. The most common causes of infant mortality and the under-five mortality are related to the perinatal period, which speaks of the necessity of improving perinatal care. In this regard, it is expected that the infant mortality rate will decrease in the coming period, given that the RS Government introduced in 2022 the legal right for all pregnant women to free non-invasive prenatal testing, which can detect in the early stages of pregnancy a predisposition to genetic diseases manifested after the birth of a child, which means better and timely prevention and treatment of genetic diseases.

Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age,		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 3.2.1: Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births		The under-five mortality rate is one of the basic indicators when it comes to children's well-being. In BiH, this rate is decreasing, and was 5.7 in 2020. However, if the 2018-2020 downward trend continues, the target value (5.1) for 2023 will not be achieved without additional interventions.
SDG indicator 3.2.2: Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (under one year of age)		The infant mortality rate is one of the indicators of the population's health. According to the latest indicator, the infant mortality rate is 4.6 per 1,000 live births, which is very close to the target value for 2023, which is 4.5.

¹² Source: WHO database



¹³ Household Budget Survey, 2015

¹⁴ Source: National Health Accounts, BiH Agency for Statistics

In terms of mortality caused by non-communicable diseases, the situation has shown a deterioration compared to the baseline value, indicating a deviation from the target value set for 2023. Several significant risk factors contribute to the occurrence and mortality from non-communicable diseases, including tobacco consumption, excessive alcohol consumption, pollution, and obesity, among others. It is crucial to make substantial investments in preventive healthcare measures and enhance both physical and

financial access to health services. In 2021, the majority of deaths were attributed to cardiovascular diseases (39%), followed by COVID-19, and malignant neoplastic diseases (15%). Other significant causes of mortality included endocrine and metabolic diseases with nutritional disorders, as well as diseases of the respiratory system. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 38% of the population in BiH are smokers, 43.2% have high blood pressure, and 26.5% are obese. In recent years,


various levels of government have implemented significant measures to reduce risk factors, such as the implementation of the Law on the Prohibition of Smoking in Enclosed Spaces in FBiH starting from 2023. Additionally, preventive programs have been established, including free HPV vaccination, early screening programs, and campaigns to raise awareness about healthy lifestyle habits.

Target 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 3.4.1: Non-communicable disease mortality rate (per 1,000 population) – total		Based on the latest estimates, the mortality rate from non-communicable diseases in BiH is showing a concerning deterioration, indicating that the target for 2023 is unlikely to be achieved. The estimated mortality rate for non-communicable diseases in 2020 is 18.7 deaths per 1000 people (24 for males and 13.6 for females), while the target value is set at 16.7 (19.8 for males and 11.1 for females).
Target 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 3.5.2: Alcohol abuse, defined in the national context as consumption of alcohol per capita (at the age of 15 and older) during a calendar year in liters of pure alcohol		The data available suggests a concerning trend of increasing per capita alcohol abuse. It is important to note a gender disparity in this regard, with men consuming 12.9 liters of alcohol per capita in 2019, compared to 3.0 liters for women. Based on the observed trend between 2016 and 2019, it is unlikely that the target value of 5.3 liters for 2023 will be achieved.

In addition to non-communicable diseases, deaths caused by traffic accidents can also be reduced by preventive action, since a large number of traffic accidents on our roads are the result of non-compliance with traffic rules and regulations and a low level of traffic culture and an increasing number

of traffic participants. Irregular speed, which is not adapted to road conditions, is one of the most common causes of traffic accidents, followed by those caused under the influence of alcohol and other intoxicants. The highest number of traffic accidents was recorded on the streets in settlements, and the lowest

on the motorways, so improving the quality of the road infrastructure reduces the number of accidents. In the period 2015-2020, the trend of improving road infrastructure is visible, and many projects are planned that could contribute to approaching the 2023 target of 11.5.

Target 3.6: By 2030, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 3.6.1: Mortality rate due to traffic injuries per 100,000 population		One of the major challenges is the persistently high mortality rate caused by traffic injuries. Based on the latest data provided by the WHO in 2019, the annual death rate due to traffic injuries is 13.5 per 100,000 population. To achieve the target value of 11.5 by 2023, further efforts and interventions are required to effectively address this issue.

An example of good practice: Droplet

Droplet is the first mobile application in BiH which, among other things, enables easier registration and identification of the necessary blood donors when needed. The development of the pilot mobile application is supported through a project implemented by the non-governmental organization PRONI, with the support of the BD BiH Government.

This idea was selected as one of the best at the RISE (Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs) regional

INCUBATION program. RISE is built and monitored by a Consortium that includes PULSE Group, Regional Youth Cooperation Office – RYCO, SEEYN, Institut Français, OFAJ DFJW, AFD - Agence Française de Développement.

An example of good practice: HPV vaccine


There is a strong emphasis on raising public awareness about the significance of HPV vaccination at all levels of government. A pilot HPV vaccination project was successfully conducted in the Sarajevo Canton, offering free vaccination to girls

and women aged 11-26 throughout 2022. Subsequently, the ministries of health at the entity level developed their own HPV vaccination programs, and the vaccination process commenced in selected areas of both entities in 2023. Various initiatives are underway in BiH to inform the public about HPV infection, provide ongoing education to parents and children regarding the HPV vaccine, and ensure the accessibility and voluntary nature of vaccination services.





Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 3.8.1: Coverage of essential health care services		N/A
SDG indicator 3.8.2: Proportion of households with large expenditure on health as a share of total household expenditure, %		N/A
- 3.8.1.a Proportion of population with household expenditures on health greater than 10% of total household expenditure or income		N/A
- 3.8.1.b Proportion of population with household expenditures on health greater than 25% of total household expenditure or income		N/A

The goal of ensuring both physical and financial access to healthcare has not been fully realized, and there is also a deviation from the target, particularly in terms of the number of nurses per 10,000 population (adjusted SDG indicator 3.c.1).

Target 3.a: Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 3.a.1: Prevalence of current tobacco use among persons (aged 15 and over)		WHO estimates the consumption of tobacco products to be at a very high level, and the reduction in its use is occurring at a slower pace. Between 2011 and 2018, there was only a one percentage point difference, with the prevalence decreasing from 39.3% to 38.3%. If this slow downward trend continues, it is unlikely that the target value of 31% for 2023 will be achieved.

The most recent surveys on tobacco consumption were carried out in 2018 in the FBiH and in 2019 in the RS. The findings from these surveys indicate a notable prevalence of tobacco use among school children in both entities, with a higher rate observed in the FBiH. The upcoming implementation of the Law on Prohibition of Smoking in Closed Spaces in the FBiH, starting in May 2023, is expected to play a significant role in reducing cigarette consumption and ultimately help achieve the target of 31% by 2023.

Target 3.c: Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workers		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG 3.c.1: Health worker density and distribution per 10,000 population		Regarding the availability of pharmacists, improvements were observed compared to the baseline value (1.2 in 2014 compared to 1.5 in 2020). However, considering the pace of improvement, further efforts are required to reach the target value for 2023 (2.1).
		Regarding the number of doctors per 10,000 population, there is a noticeable improvement compared to the baseline value (20 in 2013, compared to 23.3 in 2020), and the target value for 2023 has already been reached (22.5).
		On the other hand, the number of dentists in the period 2014-2020 per 10,000 population did not change (2.3), and therefore, the target value for 2023 (5.3) will not be reached.
		The number of nurses has significantly decreased (63 in 2014 compared to 41.1 in 2020), and it is evident that the target value for 2023 will not be reached (69.1).

While there is a lack of consistent monitoring of the emigration of medical personnel to more developed Western countries, the impact of this phenomenon on the inadequate number of healthcare professionals in our country is highly evident.

An example of good practice: Healthy Aging Centers

The Partnership for Public Health Association has established 18 Healthy Aging Centers in 10 local communities throughout BiH which provide day care, professional involvement, recreational and educational activities, health advice and care services for users. The survey conducted by the Association, UNFPA in BiH and UCL researchers revealed three key areas for improvement for the center members: physical activity, eating habits and relationships with friends and family. Institutions support these centers by providing space for their work, such as the Center for Healthy Ageing in Novo Sarajevo, which receives financial support and rents space from the municipality. Since 2019, these centers have provided support to over 1,000 beneficiaries.



SDG 4. ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

An inclusive education system ensures that all young people reach at least the minimum level of achievement, success, well-being, and engagement needed to participate in society. Although barriers to achievements, outcomes and health do not necessarily originate in educational institutions, a focus on inclusion requires that education policies remove these barriers, where they exist, so that children can pursue what is important to them in life (Sen, 1999).

Students' sense of belonging at school reflects how students perceive the inclusive school

climate. Assessments like PISA focus on evaluating the learning environment by examining how adolescents perceive their sense of welcome and safety at school. Furthermore, a student's sense of belonging at school serves as a crucial indicator of their social well-being. The report highlights that a robust sense of belonging at school positively influences learning outcomes, student engagement, and overall subjective well-being. In comparison to students from other participating countries, students in BiH demonstrate a relatively strong sense of belonging at school, as indicated by the PISA results.¹⁵

The regulations regarding compulsory pre-primary education in BiH have remained unchanged, stipulating that preschool education is mandatory one year prior to starting primary education. Pre-primary education plays a crucial role in reducing initial disparities among students in terms of prior knowledge and preparedness for elementary school. This contributes to creating

equal opportunities for all children to succeed in primary education. In BiH, pre-primary education is conducted in both public and private preschool institutions.

Currently, an estimated 26% of children between the ages of 3 and 6 attend pre-primary education, ensuring full coverage of compulsory preschool education for the year preceding formal schooling. Pre-primary education is a comprehensive endeavor encompassing the educational, care, and protection aspects for preschool children. It is governed by laws on preschool education in the entities, cantons, and the BD BiH, which regulate the organized provision of pre-primary education and the educational journey of children from six months until enrollment in school, guided by the preschool education program.

Expanding the coverage of preschool education by lowering the age limit for compulsory education faces challenges due to limited institutional capacity. Notably, in RS,

¹⁵ In BiH, the majority of students (80%) feel that they belong at school to a certain extent, and only 16% of them stated that they feel lonely at school. On average, students reported a strong sense of belonging at school and positive relationships with peers in responses to all six statements included in the PISA 2018 questionnaire to measure these aspects.

there has been a notable increase in the number of preschool institutions over the past five years, with the establishment of 45 new preschool institutions in the public and private sectors. It is worth mentioning that one consequence of this educational structure is that in many families, one parent, typically the father, remains employed while the mother assumes the responsibility of caring for the children and managing household tasks.

IMPORTANCE OF INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Investing in early childhood development is among the best investments a country can make for its future, yielding huge socioeconomic returns, not only for children but also for society as a whole. The three analyses conducted by UNICEF in BiH, with the support of the SDG Fund, in 2023 regarding investment in health and nutrition, social protection and education of children aged 0 to 6 showed astonishing results.

Investing in health and nutrition services intended for children (aged 0-6 years) brings a return on

investment up to five times in the FBiH, four times in the RS and three times in the BD over thirty years.


Investing in increasing the preschool education coverage (0-6 years) increases the number of years of education of children, which also enables mothers to have easier access to the labor market. In monetary terms, investments in early education in the next thirty years have a strong positive return: it is expected that every BAM invested will bring 6.9 BAM in the FBiH, 6.7 BAM in the RS and 5.5 BAM in the BD. Finally, by increasing the child benefit coverage, children would be lifted out of poverty and inequality would be significantly reduced through a direct distributional effect. Furthermore, the indirect effect is associated with improvements in children's health and school completion rates. The expected return on investment in expanding child benefit coverage results in a return on investment of up to 6.5 times more in the FBiH, 6.7 times more in the RS and 3.9 times more in the BD in the next thirty years.

In contrast to primary education, secondary education is not mandatory in BiH. According to the latest available data, the enrollment rate for secondary schools has reached 92%.¹⁶ However, the attendance rate for Roma children in secondary school stands at only 22.6%. At the tertiary level of education, the enrollment rate in BiH currently exceeds 38%.


A decade ago, the overall illiteracy rate in BiH was 2.8%, with a notable disparity between genders. The highest illiteracy rates are found among older women, with a rate of 5.3% for women aged 55-69 and a staggering 25.8% for women over the age of 70. This means that one in four women over the age of 70 in BiH is illiterate. This discrepancy is attributed to the enforcement of compulsory primary education after the Second World War.

Concerning the quality of schools, there is an increasing availability of computers and internet access in both primary and secondary schools. This positive trend can be attributed to budget allocations, support projects from international institutions, and donations from international and domestic partners. These contributions have been particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling the organization of online classes.


Over the past decade, BiH has witnessed a consistent growth in the number of Internet users. The availability of broadband services has also been steadily expanding, with broadband subscribers accounting for 99.95% of the total number of Internet subscribers. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the rise in internet usage, particularly in the past two years, as online classes have become the norm across all educational institutions.

Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 4.1.1.a: Average number of years of education		The average number of years of education in BiH is increasing for both sexes, and considering the pace of improvement, it is quite certain that the target value will be reached in 2023 (M=11.7, F=10.2). According to the latest data, the average number of years of education for women is 9.8 years, while for men it is 11.4 years.

Target 4.2: By 2030 ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 4.2.2: Enrollment in primary education (3-6 years of age), %		According to the latest indicators, the estimated rate of preschool education coverage (3-6 years of age) is 26%. Although there is a noticeable growth trend, it is likely that the target value of 30% for 2023 will not be reached without an additional effort.

Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical, digital and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 4.4.1: Individuals using the internet, %		In 2022, the percentage of individuals using the Internet was 78.7%. The number of individuals using the Internet began to increase with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in BiH (2020) and continued in 2021 and 2022. If the percentage of individuals using the Internet continues to increase at the same pace, it is highly likely that the target value for 2023 will be reached (80%).

In several administrative units in BiH, efforts have been made to enhance digital learning by establishing and enhancing learning and information management systems. The overall objective is to promote

the digitalization of educational processes by ensuring effective data management. These initiatives aim to create a more robust system that can promptly address emergencies and ensure educational continuity.

An example of good practice: e-learning

Through the initiative implemented by the RS Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministries of the Tuzla and West Herzegovina Cantons, in cooperation with pedagogical institutes, schools, ILO and UNICEF, 260 TVET teachers, trainers and methodologists (168 women, 92 men) were trained in e-learning and blended learning in TVET, “E-Learning Lab on Digital TVET: Modular content creation and e-pedagogy” and direct consulting on digitalization of TVET curricula. Nevertheless, BiH must work more actively on the implementation of

the ILO Rapid-STED methodology in order to predict the needs for specific skills and capacities that are needed by the growing industries in the country. This implies a strategic approach to building skills, including raising the skills of TVET teachers for 21st century education, including pedagogical, technical, and digital competencies. It is necessary to ensure greater involvement of women in STEM and IT industries, to promote networks of women in these industries and mentoring support programmes. However, there are also good practices and significant results achieved in this field.

The IT Girls initiative, which was initially launched as part of the innovation challenge for young people within the UN in BiH, had a great impact in BiH in terms of increasing the number of girls in information and communication technologies. The initiative is implemented through three pillars, the first of which targets the education sector, the second directly cooperates with the ICT sector, and the third focuses on advocacy and promotion of the idea of increasing the number of girls in ICT.

An example of good practice: Pioneering concept of the media and information literacy in the formal education systems

Having recognized the importance of integrating media and information literacy into formal education,

the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education adopted the Strategy for the Development of Media and Information Literacy in Education (MIL). The Strategy lays out a road map for the gradual, systematic and cross-curricular inclusion of the MIL concept in primary, secondary, and higher education. As the acquisition of digital and MIL skills begins at a very early stage of learning, the

educational authorities in the RS introduced a new school subject in 2021 for students of the 2nd and 3rd grades of primary schools to equip them with relevant digital and MIL competencies. The goal is to equip students with the skills and competencies needed for successful living and learning in the digital age, thereby contributing to the achievement of target 4.4.



Figure 27. Integration of IT and media literacy into formal education

An example of good practice: STEAM education

STEM education, as an interdisciplinary approach to learning, removes the traditional barriers between the four disciplines - science, technology, engineering, mathematics - and incorporates an additional letter A (STEAM) which stands for creative thinking and the arts applied in real-life situations. The key to STEAM education is the integration of these areas in learning and the concrete and clear application of what has been learned through real-life problem solving.

Today, professions in the field of STEAM education are in short supply, and an insufficient number of young

people decide to continue their education in this direction, while the market demand is increasing. Early STEAM learning opens opportunities for children to make critical and logical conclusions from preschool age. Regardless of the choice of career development of individuals, the STEAM subjects will be needed for successful navigation in the labor market, and the numerous examples from everyday life show us the importance of STEAM education.

Within the project “Better Governance for Faster Economic Growth”, EGG II, which is implemented with the support of the Kingdom of Norway, STEAM education in primary and secondary schools is being strengthened. During the first phase of the project, 32 primary and secondary schools in BiH received

STEM equipment.

The “Schools of the Future”, a part of the project, implemented in 2023 and 2024, focuses on training teachers to utilize donated STEM equipment and fostering students’ interest in technical orientation and development. A key aspect of the project is empowering girls in these fields. A total of 26 schools from BiH are actively participating, involving more than 70 teachers and 500 students. Notably, 44% of girls have expressed interest in this initiative. The current year places a special emphasis on artificial intelligence, while in 2024, another 500 students are projected to learn about robotics.

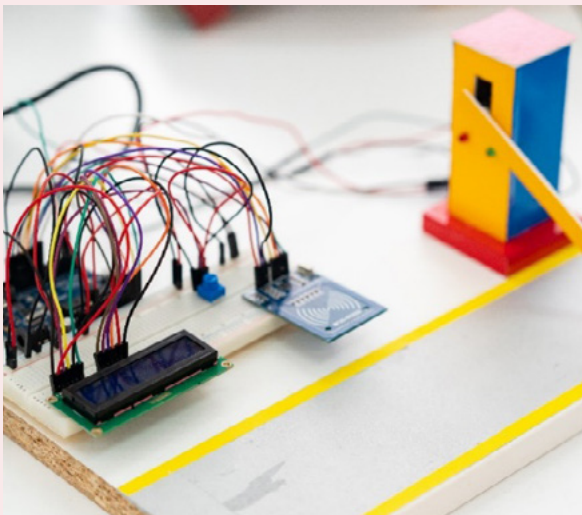


Figure 28. STEM equipment




Figure 29. Lamija Hadžimešić,
«Huso Hodžić Tešanj» Primary School

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children in vulnerable situations

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 4.5.1: Gender Inequality Index		The gender inequality index records a decreasing trend in the period 2018-2021 (0.162 vs 0.136), so BiH has already reached the set target in 2023 (0.145). An increase in the average number of years of education for women contributed most to the achievement of this target.

Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 4.a.1: Primary and secondary education facilities equipped with computers and access to the internet for students; number of students per computer, average		This indicator shows the relationship between students and computers in school classrooms and shows a positive trend. According to the data for the 2021/2022 school year, an increase in the number of computers was recorded with a simultaneous decrease in the number of students both in primary and secondary schools. The average number of students per 1 computer in primary education was 11.6 and in secondary education 10.3 in the 2021/2022 school year. It is likely that the target value for 2023 will be reached in primary education (8.0) but not in secondary education (4.5). At the same time, an average of 14.96 students in primary and 11.64 students in secondary education had access to one computer connected to the Internet. In this case too, it is very likely that the target value for 2023 will be reached in primary schools (12.0) but not in secondary schools (7.0).



SDG 5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

The BiH Law on Gender Equality regulates and protects gender equality and guarantees equal opportunities to all citizens in both the public and private spheres of society, regardless of marital and family status. Discrimination on grounds of gender and sexual orientation is prohibited.

The implementation of the third Gender Action Plan (BiH GAP) for the period 2018-2022 has been carried out in BiH. This medium-term public policy aligns with the BiH Gender Equality Law and is adopted for a five-year duration. Currently, preparations are underway for the fourth BiH GAP, covering the period 2023-2027. The measures outlined in the BiH GAP are integrated into the policies of government institutions at all levels through annual operational plans for its implementation. Additionally, sectoral strategies and action plans addressing gender equality in specific areas, such as domestic violence, gender-based violence, women, peace, and security, women's entrepreneurship, and the empowerment of women in rural areas, are being implemented at the state and entity levels. The funding for the implementation of the BiH GAP and sectoral strategies primarily comes from the budget. However, due to insufficient financing,

the Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of the BiH Gender Action Plan provides additional financial support, backed by the Kingdom of Sweden.

Efforts to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence in BiH (BiH) are consistently pursued, with a focus on aligning the legal and institutional framework with the Istanbul Convention. Significant changes have been made at the entity level, particularly in criminal law, where the Criminal Codes of both entities have been harmonized with the Istanbul Convention. The BD BiH has implemented the Law on the Protection from Domestic Violence, while the RS Government has adopted an Action Plan to implement the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Suppressing Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the period 2019-2020. In FBiH, the adoption of new strategic documents to prevent and combat domestic violence is currently underway and expected to be completed by 2027.¹⁷ Similarly, in the RS, the Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for the period 2020-2024 has been established. These initiatives reflect the ongoing commitment to address violence against women and domestic violence in BiH.

Dedicated efforts are being made to establish effective referral mechanisms and protocols for multi-sector cooperation at various levels of governance in BiH. These mechanisms aim to ensure a coordinated response

to violence against women and provide comprehensive support to victims. Sectoral, multi-sectoral, and specialized training programs are being implemented to enhance the expertise of professionals involved in the victim protection system, including judiciary, police, social welfare centers, health institutions, education, non-governmental organizations, media, and others. These initiatives seek to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among different stakeholders, ultimately strengthening the response to violence against women in BiH.

In accordance with the Istanbul Convention standards, three crisis management centers for support to rape victims were established in three health institutions, in Tuzla, Mostar and Sarajevo. In both entities, the Manual "Clinical Management of Rape as a resource for the survivor protection and standardized treatment of cases of violence and training of professionals" was prepared for health institutions. The BiH High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council improved the gender-based violence and domestic violence data collection system in the BiH judicial institutions, in such a way that the gender of the victim and the perpetrator and their relationship are now recorded, which created the conditions for more adequate monitoring and reporting of the judiciary in BiH on prosecutions and trials of cases of violence against women.

In BiH, two hotlines have been established to report cases of

¹⁷ At the level of the BiH Council of Ministers, over 70 institutions have adopted a decision on a policy of zero tolerance towards acts of sexual and gender-based harassment. In addition, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a Decision on the policy of zero tolerance towards acts of sexual harassment and gender-based harassment in the Federation administrative bodies, administrative organizations, services and other bodies founded by the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a similar legal framework also exists in the Republic of Srpska.

domestic violence - 1264 for the RS and 1265 for the FBiH. These hotlines primarily receive calls from women, highlighting their role in seeking assistance. The year 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, witnessed an increase of 800 calls compared to 2019, with the majority of calls originating from women.¹⁸ Additionally, during the first seven months of 2019, safe houses across BiH provided accommodation for 347 victims of violence against women and domestic violence. However, in the same period of 2020, this number rose to 519 victims, demonstrating a notable increase. It is worth noting that no victims were admitted to safe houses during the state of emergency prompted by the pandemic. Currently, there are eight operational safe houses in BiH. Furthermore, in accordance with the standards outlined by the Istanbul Convention, three crisis management centers were established within healthcare institutions located in Tuzla, Mostar, and Sarajevo, aiming to provide support to individuals who have experienced rape. To ensure standardized treatment and survivor protection, a comprehensive manual titled "Clinical Management of Rape" was developed, serving as a valuable resource for professionals in the field. Additionally, efforts have been made by the BiH High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council to enhance the data collection system regarding gender-based violence and domestic violence within the judicial institutions of BiH. This improvement includes recording the gender of the victim and perpetrator, as well as their relationship, facilitating more accurate monitoring and reporting by the judiciary on prosecutions and trials related to violence against women.

It is important to emphasize that the institutional gender equality mechanisms¹⁹ responded urgently

and drew attention to the problem of increased domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of the measures issued by the relevant authorities to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic to be more gender sensitive. For this purpose, recommendations were submitted to the executive authorities and crisis command centers, numerous press statements were issued, and special analyses and initiatives were conducted. In addition, existing activities and financial resources have been redirected to various forms of direct assistance to the safe houses for gender-based violence survivors.

Regarding the representation of women in politics and public life, women are still underrepresented. Of the total number of 425 mayoral candidates in the 2020 local election, only 29 were women (6.8%), while women accounted for 42.3% of candidates on the ballots for municipal and city councils and the BD BiH Assembly. Slightly more women than men (54%) are employed in the institutions of BiH. However, gender imbalance is noticed in the gender structure of managerial positions – the representation of men in managerial positions is significantly higher. In 2020, there were 64% of female judges and 36% of male judges in the judiciary at the BiH level. In the Armed Forces of BiH, of the total number of professional soldiers in 2021, 93% were men.

In terms of educational attainment, women in BiH have made significant progress over time. While there used to be a notable gender difference in the number of illiterate individuals, especially among older women, this gap has gradually diminished. The introduction of compulsory primary education after World War II played a crucial role in this regard, allowing

women to catch up with men in terms of educational opportunities. In fact, there is even a noticeable trend of a higher number of women pursuing higher education, particularly in fields like medicine, where 63% of doctors are women.

When it comes to enrollment in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, there is nearly no gender difference observed. However, in higher education, women make up 60% of the student population, including undergraduate, graduate, and specialist programs. The gender ratio remains similar in the number of graduate students and those pursuing master's degrees. However, when it comes to doctoral degrees, 60% of the recipients are men. This pattern leads to the overall result that in 2020, women between the ages of 30 and 34 outperformed men in terms of higher education achievement by a margin of 10%.

Based on the data from the BiH Agency for Statistics, it is evident that women are underrepresented in the labor market compared to men, with a ratio of approximately two to one. Many women cite household responsibilities as the primary reason for their inactivity, particularly in terms of caring for their households, children, and/or elderly and infirm individuals. This caregiving responsibility significantly contributes to women's lower participation in the labor force. While certain sectors, such as healthcare, tend to have a higher representation of women, overall, men tend to receive higher wages on average. Additionally, the lack of legal regulations surrounding the care economy and the insufficient availability of social services, including affordable pre-primary education, pose additional challenges for increasing women's labor force participation. This is

18 The Federation Labor and Social Welfare Ministry and the Republika Srpska Family, Youth and Sports Ministry; taken from "Women and Men in BiH".

19 The BiH Agency for Gender Equality, the Gender Center of the BiH Federation, the Gender Center of the Republika Srpska.




especially true in the context of early child development, where the availability and affordability of preschool education are crucial factors.


It is worth highlighting that BiH has adopted the methodology developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

to measure gender development. This methodology allows for the comparison of specific domains such as work, knowledge, power, and health with European Union member states and neighboring countries in the region. In terms of the health domain, BiH has achieved the highest score on the gender

development index, with a value of 89.8. However, in the power domain, the country has obtained the lowest score, measuring at 51.2. These scores reflect the relative strengths and areas of improvement in these specific domains in BiH compared to other countries.²⁰

Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against women and girls		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 5.1.1: Gender Development Index (GDI)		Certain progress is visible in the narrowing of the gap between men and women in three basic dimensions of human development: health, knowledge, and standard of living.

Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 5.4.1.a: Proportion of economically inactive persons aged 20-64 years who are inactive due to other family responsibilities (beside care for children and incapable adults or infirm persons)		In 2021, there was a deterioration in this indicator, for both men and women (M=12.8, F=46.8), and it is quite certain that the target value for 2023 will not be reached (M=6, F=30). It is important to note that there was also a change in the methodology for calculation of this indicator, but it should be noted that COVID-19 contributed to the deterioration of this indicator.
Adjusted SDG indicator 5.4.1.b: Proportion of economically inactive persons aged 20-64 years who are inactive due to care for children or infirm adult persons		For men, this indicator shows a slight improvement in 2021 (0.4), and the target for 2023 (0.4%) was reached.
		Regarding women, there was a deterioration in this indicator so that the value in 2021 was 8.9%. Since the target value for 2023 is 4%, it will not be reached, and it indicates the importance of investing in the care economy.

Target 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life		
Adjusted SDG indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in parliaments (%)		<p>In the most recent General Election, held in 2022, there was a decrease in the percentage of women elected to the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament (21.4% in 2018 versus 16.66% in 2022). At the entity level, there was negligible progress: women hold 26.53 seats in FBiH House of Representatives (26.35% were elected in the 2018 General Election), and 18% of seats in the RS National Assembly, like in the previous term following the 2018 General Election.</p> <p>A positive development is that, for the first time, a woman was elected to the BiH Presidency and appointed to the position of chair of the BiH Council of Ministers.</p> <p>Regarding the gender structure of the boards of directors of the ten highest-ranked companies on the stock exchange in BiH, there were 17% of women and 83% of men in 2020. Only one company had a female president, while presidents of the remaining nine companies were men.²¹</p>

In 2020, the Central Electoral Commission of BiH made a significant step by endorsing the Gender Equality Statement of Commitment. This important action demonstrates the Commission’s strong dedication to advancing gender equality in

all spheres of public and political life. As part of this commitment, all political parties operating in BiH are encouraged to embrace the principle of gender equality and integrate it into their programs and activities.





YEAR	2018	2022
GENERAL ELECTIONS		
 Men	4.378	4.200
 Women	3.119	3.058
YEAR	2016	2020
LOCAL ELECTIONS		
 Men	17.343	17.977
 Women	12.470	12.832

Figure 30. Structure of candidates by sex in general and local elections

IN THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION A TOTAL OF



145

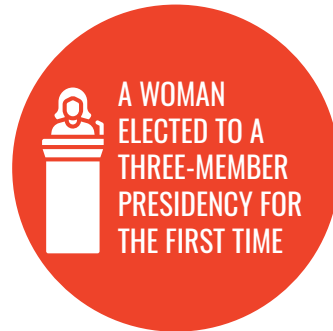
POLITICAL SUBJECTS

- 90 POLITICAL PARTIES
- 17 INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES
- 38 COALITIONS

7.258

CANDIDATES

-  3,058 WOMEN
-  4,200 MEN



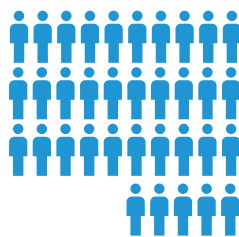
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BIH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

42 REPRESENTATIVES

7 WOMEN



35 MEN



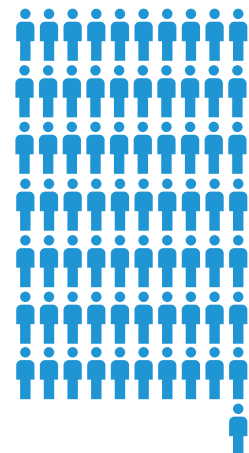
TOTAL NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FBiH PARLIAMENT

98 REPRESENTATIVES


27 WOMEN



71 MEN



COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2022-2026 COMPRISES

8 MEN (88%) 

1 WOMAN (12.12%) 

During the 2022 General Election, a comprehensive range of 145 political entities (90 political parties, 17 independent candidates, and 38 coalitions) obtained certification to partake in the electoral process. A noteworthy total of 7,258 candidates (comprising 3,058 women, accounting for 42%, and 4,200 men, representing 58%) successfully underwent the certification process and had their names printed on the general election ballots.

It was for the first time that a woman was elected to a three-member Presidency of BiH.

A total of 42 representatives, of whom 7 are women (16.67%) and 35 are men (83.33%), were elected to the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly.

The House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament welcomed 98 elected representatives, with 27 of them being women (27.55%) and 71 being men (72.45%). In RS, men assumed the positions of president and two vice presidents. The RS National Assembly elected 83 delegates, with 16 of them being women (19.28%). As for the BD BiH Assembly, four women (12.9%) were elected as representatives.

The Council of Ministers of BiH is for the first time chaired by a woman, and the Council of Ministers in the 2022-2026 term consists of 8 men (88%) and one woman (12.12%).

Currently, there is a lack of women in leadership positions across political parties, and the number of women in other managerial roles is also limited. The civil service lacks a systematic approach to promoting gender equality, and the representation of women in top management positions differs significantly, ranging from only 19% in the RS entity to 41% in state-level institutions.



SDG 6. ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene are considered to be the key socio-economic and health indicators, as well as the key determinants of child survival, maternal and child health, family well-being and economic productivity. Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are also used in constructing quintiles of wealth monitored in many integrated household surveys to analyze inequalities between the rich and the poor. Access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene are therefore key indicators for many household surveys and population censuses.

In our country, approximately 89% of the population has access to the public water supply network, while 48% have access to the sewage network. However, only 15% of all wastewaters is currently treated. The existing wastewater treatment systems are outdated and require significant investment, particularly to meet the standards set by the European Union. Continuous efforts are being made to enhance the quality of drinking water, establish and expand water safety plans, and improve the coverage of water supply and sanitation services. This includes the development of secondary legislation to enhance the warning system and ensure an effective response in case of sudden pollution that could impact water quality. While legislation in these areas already exists, ongoing efforts are being made to ensure compliance with relevant directives from the European Union. Furthermore, both entities have adopted new

modernization programs in 2022, aiming to provide more efficient and sustainable services. These programs introduce a measurement system to assess service quality and implement new financing mechanisms within the sector, fostering further improvements in the water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

Water plays an important role in the economy in BiH. Hydropower plants are key in power generation, with a total potential of more than 6,000 MW, of which only 2,504 MW (35%) have been used. There is also great potential for irrigation and the agricultural sector has a significant share in the country's economy with a contribution to GDP of more than 6% and employment of 18%. In addition, water is of great importance for the tourism sector, which is expanding.

Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services		Regarding this indicator, the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services shows a rising trend: it increased from 75% (2019) to 89% (2020), exceeding the target value for 2023 (80%).
Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 6.3.1: Population connected to urban wastewater treatment, %		In BiH, there is a significant increase in the percentage of the population connected to urban wastewater treatment from 3.6% (2015) to 21.7% (2017), which exceeded the target value for 2023 (20%). This increase stems from the fact that larger urban areas have invested in installing wastewater purifiers, covering a significant number of citizens.
Target 6.5: By 2030 implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 6.5.1: Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0 – 100 scale)		Compared to 2017, in 2020, the value of this indicator increased from 52.9 to 60.88 on a scale of 0-100, and it is very likely that the target value for 2023 will be reached (65). The capacity to implement the IWRM elements is generally adequate, and the elements are mostly implemented within long-term programmes.

Although in BiH 89% of the population uses drinking water from the safely managed systems, the state of water quality is not satisfactory in the largest part of the country. According to the length of watercourses in 2020, 49.80% of surface watercourses have poor

water quality, and only 7.05% have high quality (2015 – it was 18%)²². The goal is to reduce the percentage of poor-quality watercourses to 15% by 2030. 99.1% of households in BiH have running water in the housing unit or from an individual source in the immediate vicinity.



SDG 7. ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

In low- and middle-income countries, a significant portion of household energy consumption is attributed to cooking, lighting, and heating. Typically, households in these regions rely on solid fuels (such as wood, charcoal, biomass) or petroleum in conjunction with inefficient technologies like open

fires, stoves, space heaters, or lamps. It is widely recognized that the use of such inefficient energy sources for cooking, heating, and lighting contributes to high levels of household air pollution, particularly indoors.

The detrimental health effects associated with indoor air pollution can be mitigated by adopting clean fuels and technologies for all major household energy needs. In certain cases, the use of advanced cookstoves that meet the emission rate targets outlined in WHO guidelines, along with strict safety protocols, can also be effective.

Unfortunately, over the past five years, there has been no visible progress in the adoption of clean fuels and technologies, leading to persistent air quality challenges in BiH.

The reliance on inefficient energy sources and the resulting air pollution, including PM 2.5, significantly impact the environment. Consequently, it is not surprising that BiH ranked 19th on the list of the most polluted countries in 2022. Addressing these issues is crucial to improve air quality, protect public health, and reduce the environmental impact caused by household energy consumption in the country.²³

Target 7.1: By 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology		Regarding this indicator, due to a change in methodology, a difference was observed in the baseline values defined in the Framework and those currently available. The share of the urban population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology has improved from 62% (2015) to 67% (2020), so it is very likely that the target value for 2023 will be reached (69%).

Target 7.1: By 2030 ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)		Regarding the share of renewable energy sources in total energy consumption, there was an increase from 35.7% (2018) to 37.6% (2019). If the growing trend continues in the coming years, it can be expected that the target value for 2023 will be reached (41%).

In 2022, the Energy Community Ministerial Council defined new national target values for 2030 regarding the share of renewable energy sources (RES) in total gross energy consumption. For BiH, this value is 43.6%, and according to the latest data from 2019, BiH has a solid 39.84% share of RES in the gross final consumption. The reason is the hydropower potential in the electricity segment. In addition to hydropower plants, BiH also has a large cost-competitive solar and wind potential. The identified RES potential in BiH indicates that in the long term it is possible to decarbonize not only the power sector, but also the heating/cooling and transport sectors through their electrification.

Of the total installed capacity of the production facilities in BiH, 48.5% refers to hydropower plants, 46.3% to thermal power plants, while 2.9% refers to wind power plants. The remaining 2.3% refers to small generators, including small hydropower plants, solar power plants, biogas and biomass power plants, small wind power plants and industrial power plants.

The renewable energy sources are highly dependent on weather conditions and cannot always generate the same level of electricity. This is why, “virtual power plants” were formed in BiH, which form a network of several electricity generators, batteries - storage devices and smart consumers

that manage consumption and, at some point, restore stability to the system. The model of “virtual power plant” approach to the electricity market was established due to its importance for encouraging the power generation from renewable sources, improving services on the wholesale and local distribution market, optimizing generation from renewable sources with the needs of the electricity system, but also the legally established right of generators to free access to the electricity market. Furthermore, this is about the gradual acceptance of the market-oriented concept of purchasing electricity from renewable sources instead of the previous concept based on incentive schemes and guaranteed purchase, which is losing importance due to the reduction in the prices of production technology, and thus to the greater competitiveness of the renewable sources compared to the sources using fossil fuels. The first virtual power plant in the electric power system of BiH was established in mid-2022 and by the end of the same year, six “virtual power plants” had access to the electricity market in BiH. The total installed capacity of all production plants was 117.48 MW (of which 86.28 MW in small hydropower plants, 28.74 MW in photovoltaic power plants and 2.46 MW in biomass and biogas power plants).


BiH has implemented effective mechanisms to promote power generation from renewable energy

sources, including measures such as guaranteed purchase prices for all renewable energy plants and the obligation of suppliers to procure appropriate quantities of electricity from renewable sources for end customers. These mechanisms provide incentives and support for the development of renewable energy projects.

The country has witnessed a notable increase in the number of facilities generating electricity from renewable sources. In 2021, the FBiH had 72 small hydropower plants, 453 solar power plants, and 8 wind power plants. In RS, there were 38 small hydropower plants and 219 solar power plants, with no wind power plants constructed at that time.

The future expansion of renewable energy sources will depend on several factors, including the reduction in technology costs, the effectiveness of incentive mechanisms, and the streamlining of administrative processes for obtaining permits.

In 2022, electricity generation from smaller renewable sources, primarily small hydropower plants, increased by 3.5% compared to 2021. Additionally, solar power plants recorded a substantial increase of 58.4% in electricity generation during the same period. These figures demonstrate the growing contribution of renewable energy to the overall electricity supply in BiH.

Target 7.3: By 2030 double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 7.3.1: Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP		Regarding this indicator, due to a change in the methodology, a difference was observed between the baseline values defined in the Framework and those currently available. In the period 2015-2019, BiH was gradually reducing the energy intensity level from 6.7 in 2015 to 6.5 as recorded in 2018. According to the latest data for 2019, this indicator was 6.1 MJ/\$2017 PPP, which exceeded the target value for 2023 (6.2).

BiH has made significant progress in achieving its medium-term target for energy intensity, which refers to the amount of energy required to produce one unit of economic output. The latest data indicates that the country has reached the target set for 2023.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of energy efficiency progress, it would be beneficial to disaggregate energy intensity data by sectors or end-uses. This would provide valuable insights into the efficiency levels across different industries and types of consumption, such as cement or steel production, as well as different vehicle types like cars or trucks.

The RS Energy Development Strategy for 2035 identifies key strategic priorities. One of these priorities is the expansion and improvement of the legal framework, including the creation of heat maps for cities and municipalities in RS. Additionally, the strategy aims to stimulate the promotion of sustainable development goals (SDGs), with specific targets such as 75% co-generated heat, 50% heat from renewable energy sources (RES), and 50% waste heat or combined heat and power.

Promoting “green” jobs and economic activities is another important aspect emphasized in the strategy. The implementation of energy efficiency measures is expected to lead to job growth and economic activities in related industries such as construction, architecture, building materials production, and raw materials

production.

Both entities in BiH, as well as the BD BiH, have adopted energy efficiency laws simultaneously, highlighting their commitment to improving energy efficiency and implementing energy-saving measures.

BiH, as a contracting party to the Energy Community Treaty, is obliged to prepare an integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) in accordance with the recommendation of the EU Ministerial Council 2018/1/MC-EnC. The plan includes 5 different areas/dimensions, namely:

- energy security,
- full integration of the internal energy market,
- energy efficiency,
- decarbonization,
- research, innovation, and competitiveness.

At present, an Integrated Energy and Climate Plan of BiH for the period 2021-2030 is being prepared. Through the NECP implementation BiH will integrate the energy and climate targets and appropriate policies and measures, thereby contributing to the harmonization of energy policies with EU policies. This will reduce administrative burdens and ensure greater connectivity and longer-term predictability of investments.

In 2020, BiH signed the Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans at the Summit in Sofia, thereby committing itself

to the implementation of this document through the five key areas: climate change, circular economy, biodiversity, the fight against air and water, land and soil pollution, and the sustainability of rural areas. With this, BiH committed itself to working together with the EU and other signatory states towards achieving carbon neutrality on the continent by 2050 by introducing a strict climate policy and reforming the energy and transport sectors. The signing of the Declaration underscores the prioritization of energy efficiency and its enhancement across all sectors. It emphasizes the commitment to supporting renovation schemes for both private and public buildings, ensuring sufficient funding, and fully implementing Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings.

By signing the Energy Community Treaty, the UN Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement and other treaties and agreements (e.g., the Energy Charter Treaty, the Western Balkan Initiative), BiH expressed its clear commitment to the sustainable development of the energy sector. With a targeted increase in the efficiency of the sector and the use of renewable energy sources, BiH can achieve parallel convergence with the assumed obligations and policies of the EU and position energy as a driver of stability and sustainable development of the economy.

An example of good practice: Smart schools

The Center for Development and Support Tuzla leads the regional project “Innovative Minds for Smart Schools” (SMART Schools) in cooperation with the Tuzla Canton Government, the Green Action from Zagreb, Croatia, the Government of the Brod-Posavina County, Croatia, and the Brod Cooperative for Environmental Protection, Slavonski Brod.

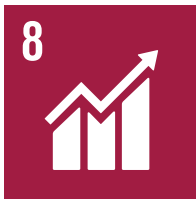
The project is supported by the INTERREG IPA cross-border cooperation programme Croatia,

BiH and Montenegro and includes the energy reconstruction of seven primary and secondary schools, a cross-border energy saving competition, an IT/technical competition in renewable energy technology and the Young Innovators Camp.

The main goal of the project is to promote smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in the cross-border project area through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy. The project included 37,596 participants from 105 schools and achieved significant results, including 219,446 kWh of

energy savings (6.93%), training of 42 school employees in energy management, improving the energy innovations of 19 young innovators and renovating seven schools.

The project is recognizable by the involvement and partnership of government institutions, such as the Government of the Tuzla Canton, which co-financed the project. Moreover, representatives of three ministries participated in the project activities. The same partners approved the second phase of the “SMART Schools – 2” project involving an increased number of schools and beneficiaries.



SDG 8. PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly hindered the overall economy in BiH, causing a slowdown. However, based on the data from 2021, there was a growth of 7.5% in economic activity.

It is important to note that the observed significant economic growth is a result of comparing the GDP with that of 2020 when a substantial portion of economic activity was halted or operating at reduced capacity due to the restrictive measures implemented following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is crucial to consider the potential impact of the conflict in Ukraine and the global price increases, which are expected to be reflected in future statistical reports, along with other unpredictable challenges.

Target 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 8.1.1: Real GDP growth rate		In 2021, the growth of economic activity was 7.4%, which is above the target value for 2023 (3.2%). However, it should be noted that this growth is the result of comparing GDP with GDP 2020, in which the intensity of production and service activities, due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, was very low.
Target 8.2: Achieve higher levels of productivity of economies through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labor-intensive sectors		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 8.2.2: Estimated GDP (2011 PPP \$), by sex		Progress is visible in terms of an estimated GDP per capita for women and men. According to the latest data for 2021, the estimated GDP per capita for women was 10,709 (2017 PPP \$), while for men it was 19,917 (2017 PPP \$). It is highly likely that the target values for 2023 (F = 11,080; M = 21,100) will be reached.

According to the data of the BiH Agency for Statistics, in 2021, the economic activity growth was 7.5%, which was the result of an increased activity in the section of accommodation and food preparation and serving activities (19.5%), manufacturing (14.4%), trade (12.6%), transport (11.3%) and in the ICT sector (11%).²⁴

The Regional Cooperation Council estimated in 2019 that the share of employment in the informal economy was 25%-35% of total employment. High levels of taxation, including on low income, discourage formal employment. This creates a risk of further marginalization from


regular employment and training and development opportunities (ETF, 2019).

The employment rate for 2022 was 40.2%, which was a slight increase compared to the previous year when it was 40.61%. The employment rate records a significant gender gap, which is the consequence of the low activity of women in the labor market. The activity rate for women is 38.8% and 59.7% for men.

In both entities, the ownership of businesses is distributed with women owning 27% of them. In RS, the majority of women-owned enterprises (97.2%) fall under the

category of micro enterprises. In the FBiH (FBiH), women-owned enterprises are primarily found in low productivity sectors and, on average, tend to be smaller compared to enterprises owned by men. Research conducted by Foundation 787 in April 2020 indicates that women-owned enterprises were disproportionately affected by the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In BiH, women-owned enterprises are predominantly categorized as new businesses, with 40% of them being less than 6 years old, suggesting a positive trend that may contribute to an increase in the number of female-led enterprises (World Bank, 2018).

Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services


Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural activities, by sex		Significant progress has been made in BiH in reducing informal employment for women and men. The share of total informal employment in non-agricultural activities in 2021 was 8.4% (M=6.9%; M=9.6%) and the target value for 2030 was reached (total 12%, F=9%; M=14%). The gradual urbanization of BiH also contributes to the achievement of this target, but it is important to note the change in the methodology of conducting the Labor Force Survey, which contributed to a more realistic presentation of this indicator.

In early 2022, the government of the FBiH (FBiH) introduced an online procedure for granting financial assistance aimed at alleviating the impacts of the pandemic on trades and self-employment activities. The entire process, from the announcement of the Public Call to the disbursement of funds to the accounts of individual entrepreneurs,

was conducted in a contactless manner, exclusively online, and was completed within 40 days. The Ministry of Development, Crafts, and Entrepreneurship of the Federation developed an application and established a communication link with the beneficiaries, eliminating the need for physical collection of documents or waiting in queues. The

successful collaboration and efficient implementation of this initiative enabled the support of 24,766 beneficiaries and the preservation of a total of 44,056 jobs in the FBiH, with an allocation of nearly 60 million BAM.


Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 8.3.2: New registered enterprises per 1,000 population (age group 15-64 years)		In 2020, an average of one LLC was registered per 1,000 people. In the next period, it will be necessary to invest additional efforts to reduce the number of procedures (13) and the time of collection and implementation (80 days) for the establishment of a company and to reach the target value for 2023 (2.00).

Target 8.4: Improve through 2030 resource efficiency in consumption and production, and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Adjusted SDG indicator 8.4.b: Resource productivity (“PPS per kg”)		Productivity of resources has been growing slightly since 2015, when it was 0.82 PPS/kg (Purchasing Power Standard per kilogram) until 2019, when it was 0.90 PPS/kg. The reference year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 crisis, which caused a drop in resource productivity, especially due to a drop in GDP compared to relatively equal domestic consumption. According to the latest data for 2020, resource productivity is 0.86 PPS/kg, so it cannot be expected that the target value for 2023 (1.8 PPS/kg) will be reached.

Regarding resource productivity, there has been a positive growth trend observed from 2015 to 2019, with the exception of a drop in productivity in 2016 attributed to a significant increase in domestic material consumption. In 2020, the economy of BiH experienced a 9.8% increase

in natural resource consumption compared to the base year of 2015. On average, each inhabitant of BiH consumed approximately 11.7 tons of agricultural crops, minerals, metals, and fossil fuels in 2020, equivalent to a daily consumption of 32 kilograms of resources per

person. To achieve higher economic value production while minimizing material resource consumption, it is necessary to invest in a diverse range of industrial activities, service sectors, and construction, as well as to utilize various energy sources.

Target 8.5: By 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 8.5.2: Employment rate		A slight decline in the employment rate is recorded in the labor market in 2021 (39.6%). There was a gender employment gap, especially as the consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic (F=28.7%; M=51.1%). At the same time, the youth employment rate was declining (19.8%). The target values for 2023 have been reached in terms of the overall employment rate (37.3%) and the male employment rate (46.9%). However, it cannot be expected that the employment rate values for women (32%) and youth (24.6%) be reached in 2023.

The labor market, in terms of age groups, is characterized by a high proportion of employees (out of the total number of employees) aged 25-49 (66.3%), while young people in the age group 15-24 account for only 7.9%. In addition, of the total number of unemployed persons, 62.5% are in the age group of 25-49, and 18.1% are young people.

The institutions in BiH are implementing a number of programmes to increase employment, and an example of some measures implemented in 2021 is given in the Table below.

Level of government	Type of programme	Number of beneficiaries	Number of beneficiaries by category
FBiH	Support to employment and rehabilitation	6,512	253 (young people with no work experience); 517 (women-long-term unemployed); 96 (with work experience of up to 35); 20 (veterans); 1,077 (long-term unemployed 40+); 32 (children of disabled war veterans); 4,053 (all categories).
	Start-up entrepreneurship initiatives	1,580	335 (young people); 272 (women); 54 (veterans); 919 (all categories).
RS	Support to employment and rehabilitation	3,153	843 (all categories); 43 (persons with no work experience, with tertiary education); 12 (Roma) 2.255 (targeted categories in the economy).
	Start-up entrepreneurship initiatives	1,475	200 (all categories); 1.274 (children of killed veterans, disabled war veterans); 1 (Roma).
BD	Support to employment and rehabilitation	133	50 (long-term unemployed); 4 (first work experience); 58 (young people under 30); 16 (50+); 2 (members of families of killed veterans and disabled war veterans); 3 (Roma);
	Start-up entrepreneurship initiatives	42	All categories


It is evident that the youth employment rate is declining, highlighting the need for greater attention to address this issue. Another challenge is youth emigration, as BiH struggles to compete with countries that offer better conditions in attracting talented individuals. To support the labor market, legal opportunities for re-skilling, up-skilling, and adult education have been introduced in both entities and the BD BiH.

Although the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) is decreasing in BiH, gender and urban-rural gaps persist. For instance, the smallest share of NEET youth was observed among women in urban areas (15.7%), while the largest share was among women in rural areas (23.9%).²⁵

In the years ahead, the authorities in BiH will need to prioritize

addressing the skills gap, guided by the principles of the Global Compact for Migration. This will involve promoting regular migration routes and simultaneously addressing the root causes of emigration in the long term. It is crucial to integrate migration issues into development and sectoral policies to harness the development potential of migration and work towards achieving Agenda 2030.

Target 8.6: By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training (%) ²⁶		Compared to the base year (2019), the situation in 2021 improved, so the proportion of youth not in education, employment or training was 19.9% (F=20.4%; M=19.5%). The target value for 2023 of 18% (total and for both sexes) will obviously be reached.

An example of good practice: Local employment

The International Labor Organization (ILO) launched the second phase of the project “The European Union support partnerships for local employment” in BiH. After the earlier development of the professional training programme, a platform was created that brings together local authorities, employment agencies, schools and training centers, non-profit organizations and employers for the purpose of training or re-skilling of the unemployed and hard-to-employ people in order to master new skills that will enable them to find jobs in the labor market.

Key results include establishment of 20 local employment partnerships, training of more than 1,600 unemployed people through local employment partnerships and more than 500 employed persons immediately after training.



Figure 31. Training of unemployed people for work on CNC machines

25 2021 Labor Force Survey. The BiH Agency for Statistics.

26 For the purposes of this indicator, youth are considered persons aged between 15 and 24 (inclusive), who represent the discouraged young population, as well as those who, among other things, are out of the labor force due to disability or engagement in housework.

Target 8.9: By 2030 devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 8.9.1: Sustainable tourism		The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly visible in the tourism sector. Due to the pandemic, in 2021 there was a decrease compared to the baseline value. If a comparison is made with the results from 2020, in 2021, an increase in the annual rate of receipts from tourism of 42.2% and an increase in the share of the tourism sector in GDP BiH to 6.6% are recorded. In the coming period, a continuous increase in receipts from tourism is expected, due to restored freedom of movement after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the activities aimed at attracting domestic and foreign tourists undertaken by all levels of government, including the private sector. The target values for 2023 are 7% for the annual growth rate of receipts and 10% for the share in GDP.

BiH possesses remarkable natural beauty and a rich cultural and historical heritage, which make tourism a promising yet untapped potential. While the tourism sector had been one of the fastest-growing in the country, contributing significantly to GDP, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a drastic decline of over 85% in tourism revenue and nearly 80% in the number of

overnight stays in 2020. However, the sector began its recovery in 2021, and this positive trend has continued into 2022 and 2023.

Although the pandemic had a detrimental impact on winter and health tourism, it also sparked an increased interest in nature activities, hiking, and similar pursuits. Despite signs of rapid

recovery in the tourism sector post-pandemic, its performance has yet to reach a satisfactory level. Additional investments are needed to develop tourism infrastructure, including air, road, and rail transportation, and to attract new travel and tour operators. Simultaneously, it is crucial to continue promoting the tourism potential of BiH to the global audience.

An example of good practice: “Via Dinarica trails: Sustainable tourism for green growth”

Via Dinarica connects seven countries and territories that the Dinaric Alps Mountain range stretches across: from Slovenia to Albania. It is a platform used for the development of local communities and small businesses operating at the local, state, and international levels in catering and outdoor tourism services, as well as for the promotion of tourism in nature and cultural heritage. The Via Dinarica concept promotes sustainable tourism and economic development of the countries along the Dinaric Alps corridor, while preserving the environment and respecting

the socio-cultural diversity and authenticity of the communities.

The goal of the Via Dinarica project, which was launched in BiH by USAID and UNDP in 2014, and which was later joined by the Italian Development Cooperation Agency and domestic institutions at different levels of government, is to connect cities and rural communities in the region. The project contributes to raising awareness about good business practices and environmental protection, creating a tourism offering based on unique natural beauty, traditional products, and cultural heritage, and connecting the region in order to initiate sustainable development.

So far, the project has resulted in the evaluation of more than 3,500 km of trails and the identification of accommodation and service

capacities recognized within the world-recognized online search tools Outdooractive platform. Over 170 jobs were created and the capacities of nearly 200 tourism service providers were strengthened, including producers of traditional products within seven value chains: honey, herbs, forest mushrooms, forest fruits, traditional handicrafts, fruits, and fruit products.

The tourism offering is diversified and includes hiking, mountain biking, rafting, etc. Via Dinarica attracted global attention through magazines such as National Geographic, The Guardian, Lonely Planet, Outside Magazine, Vogue, The Independent, which wrote about Via Dinarica, extolling its beauty and uniqueness.



Figure 32. Jelenjača, Lukomir



Figure 33. Jahorina



SDG 9. BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

Regarding infrastructure quality, BiH has made strides, but the development of modern road, rail, and air transport remains an ongoing economic challenge. While there has been a decrease in the traffic accidents death rate in recent years, the state of road traffic in our country is still unsatisfactory,


placing us at the top of the European ranking in terms of traffic-related death rates. In 2023, BiH signed an investment contract to continue the construction of Corridor Vc, aiming to enhance connectivity between BiH, the region, and the European Union, thereby fostering accelerated economic development. Completion of the Corridor Vc construction is anticipated by the end of 2028, along with ongoing investments in the construction of fast and arterial roads and improvements in air traffic, which will enhance the functionality of existing airports in the country.



To bridge the gap with the European average and create the conditions for accelerated sustainable growth, additional incentives are needed to improve the road infrastructure. The BiH Transport Framework Strategy for the period 2016-2030, based on sectoral strategic documents of the entities and BD, opens the possibility for additional financial support from the EU and international financial institutions for infrastructure projects. Harmonizing regulations governing rail, road, maritime transport, inland waterways, and intermodal transport with the Acquis Communautaire and implementing them are still necessary steps.

Target 9.2: Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and by 2030 significantly raise the industry's share of employment and GDP in line with national circumstances

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 9.2.1: Manufacturing value added: as a proportion of GDP (9.2.1.a); per capita (9.2.1.b) US\$		In 2021, the growth of manufacturing value added was recorded, both in the proportion of GDP BiH (14.4%), and per capita (\$667), while the medium-term values for 2023 were exceeded (13% of the proportion of GDP and \$600 per capita).

Target 9.3: Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises to financial services including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 9.3.1: Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added (%)		In 2020, the share of small-scale industries in total industry value added was 11.13%. Compared to the currently available baseline value from 2017 (11.79%), a slight decrease is visible. However, compared to the baseline value from the Framework (17.06%), the decline is much more pronounced. It is evident that the target value for 2023 (21.40%) will not be reached. However, this situation may be attributed to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic which particularly affected small enterprises.

Target 9.4: By 2030 upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 9.4.1: Greenhouse emission per US\$ 1 of GDP		Significant progress has been made in BiH in terms of reducing CO2 emissions from manufacturing. In 2019, 0.42 kg of CO2 was emitted for manufacturing one dollar (1 US\$) value and the target value for 2030 (0.47 kg of CO2) was reached.
Target 9.b: Support domestic technology development, research, and innovation in developing countries including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for industrial diversification and value addition to commodities		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 9.b.1: Proportion of medium and high-tech industry in total value added		The proportion of medium and high-tech industry in total value added in the country is stagnating. There was only a slight improvement in 2020 (19%) compared to the baseline value from 2015 (18%). If the growth trend continues at the current pace, the target value for 2023 (21%) will not be reached.

The medium-term target has been achieved in terms of the proportion of value added in GDP and per capita. However, there is still a low percentage of “small-scale industry” and medium and high-tech industry in the total value added. According to the latest available UNECE data, the proportion of value added from small-scale industries in total industry value added remained nearly unchanged in 2019 compared to the previous year (11.13%).

To increase the proportion of the medium-high and high-tech industry sectors, innovation is crucial. The development of an innovative economy is the objective of the Smart Specialization Strategy, which is currently in the drafting phase. This strategy will identify and highlight the potential and competitive advantages, focusing on priority areas for future investment.

Although progress has been made in terms of CO2 emissions per unit of value added, its value remains high, especially in energy conversion (thermal power plants, heating plants, transport) and

fuel combustion in industry. In accordance with the obligations arising from the Paris Agreement, BiH has begun to implement the mitigation measures (nationally determined contribution-NDC), under which BiH:

- Updated its conditional greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to 36.8% below the 1990 levels by 2030.
- Increased the unconditional greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to 33.2% by 2030 compared to the 1990 levels, 18% more than in the initial NDC.
- Set long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for 2050 at 61.7% (unconditional) and 65.6% (conditional) below the 1990 levels.
- For the first time, included adaptation priorities and actions.

BiH adopted the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) which contributes to the goals of the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 and enables institutions to integrate the climate change risks

into the development planning and budgeting processes. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the Low Emissions Strategy 2020-2030 build on the National Adaptation Plan in terms of incorporating the climate change adaptation approach into the decision-making and budgeting processes. Both strategies, as well as the Environmental Protection Strategy 2022-2032 (ESAP) were adopted at all levels of government in BiH.

To create a developing and modern country, it is necessary to invest in innovation and knowledge-based economies driven by new technologies. However, BiH currently dedicates a relatively small portion of its GDP to innovation, science, and research and development (R&D), and there exists limited awareness of their significance in economic and social advancement. The estimated combined expenditure on research, including both private and public investments, amounted to approximately 0.19% of the GDP in 2021.²⁷

27 Agency for Statistics of BiH, First Release: Research and Development 2021, 12 January 2023, p. 2 https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2023/RDE_01_2021_Y1_1_BS.pdf

A total of 1,483 researchers were employed in 2021, measured in full-time equivalents. Of these researchers, 48.8% were men, while 51.2% were women. The majority of researchers were employed in the higher education sector, with 1,289 individuals. Additionally, 143 researchers were employed in the business sector, and 49 in the government sector. However, there were no formally employed researchers in the non-profit sector.

When categorized by scientific field, the largest proportion of researchers work in engineering and technologies, accounting for 37.8% of the total. This is followed by social sciences (20.6%), humanities (14.6%), natural sciences (12.7%), agricultural sciences (10.1%), and medical and health sciences (4.2%).

In 2021, there were 460.2 researchers in full time equivalent per million inhabitants, which is close to the target value for 2023. The number of researchers in full time equivalent is increasing relative to the total population but is decreasing in absolute terms. Insufficient funds



are the most common reason for the lack of innovative activities in the companies in BiH. Due to skills shortages, a fragmented labor market and low levels of integration into global knowledge flows and value chains, foreign direct investments are not oriented to knowledge-based sectors.

Efficient and accessible information and communication infrastructure and services are a prerequisite for the development of all segments of society. The availability of broadband Internet is an indispensable factor for ensuring the competitive position of the state in the modern globalized society. BiH records the continuous development of broadband networks, however, the level of presence of broadband access of high and very high speeds (speeds of at least 30 Mbit/s or at least 100 Mbit/s) is still not satisfactory. The total number of fixed broadband Internet subscribers at the end of 2022 was 875,598, and, compared to 2021, a growth of 9.75% was recorded. The number of mobile internet users in 2022 was 2.61 million, which shows

a growth of 13.98% compared to the previous year. In 2023, the adoption of strategic documents (Electronic Communications Sector Policy and Broadband Access Development Strategy in BiH) is expected, which will focus on measures to encourage the further development of broadband access, with increased activities to remove identified obstacles and shortcomings in the development.

As a measure to support the labor market, legal opportunities for re-skilling, up-skilling and education of adults were introduced in both entities and BD BiH. Guided by the principles of the Global Compact for Migration, in the coming years, the authorities in BiH will need to make more efforts to address the lack of skills through the promotion of regular migration routes and in parallel, to eliminate the causes of emigration in the long run. It is necessary to integrate migration issues into development and sectoral policies in order to maximize the development potential of migration and the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Target 9.5: Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 9.5.1: Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP		The estimated total allocations for research in BiH were around 0.19% of GDP in 2021, and there was no progress compared to the baseline value. It is evident that the target value for 2023 (0.53%) will not be reached.
SDG indicator 9.5.2: Researchers (in full time equivalent) per million inhabitants		According to the latest data for 2021, there were 460 researchers working in BiH per million inhabitants. The trend of this indicator is growing and is driven by population decline. This is why there were no positive developments as the number of researchers in absolute terms is in constant decline. If this trend continues, the target value for 2023 (500) will hardly be reached.

An example of good practice: Banja Luka – The City of the Future

The “Banja Luka – The City of the Future” initiative was jointly implemented by the City of Banja Luka, the RS Ministry of Scientific and Technological Development, Higher Education and Information Society and UNDP by piloting access to using technology and innovation for better public services and quality of life in Banja Luka. The initiative was launched in 2022-2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when innovative ideas were collected through an innovation challenge from public institutions, businesses, academia, and the civil society on how to improve public services, make public spaces more resilient and use technology for a more sustainable and comfortable city.



Figure 34. Banja Luka

Out of 60 innovation applications, 10 initiatives were selected for piloting in two city areas – Lazarevo I and Lazarevo II. In just 8 months of this pilot intervention, the pioneering solutions for smart waste management, digital management of city green areas, smart public lighting system, smart city transport and traffic and road management were introduced; an e-commerce platform as a form of support for rural areas and rural companies within the city, setting new quality standards for the provision of public services.

The initiative mobilized numerous partners, including the Innovation Center Banja Luka of the University of Banja Luka, the media, and citizens. Many of these technology-based pilot solutions have been expanded at the city level, while the private sector, especially the ICT industry in the Banja Luka region, represent a wealth of local talent, technological knowledge and experience that can further drive the transformation of Banja Luka into the city of the future.



Figure 35. Pilot interventions in Banja Luka



SDG 10. REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Addressing inequality in the country involves improving the position of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, the Roma community, returnees and internally displaced persons, families with two or more children, the elderly, the unemployed, low-skilled workers, women, young people, and children. Simultaneously, reducing inequality among countries entails fostering faster development in least developed and developing nations.

Based on the most recent data from the Agency for Statistics, approximately 16.9% of the population in BiH was living in relative poverty. There was a significant disparity between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth, with the former spending 4.9 times more than the latter. The elderly faced a poverty rate of 19.6%, while the proportion of children living in relatively poor households stood at 18.7%. Despite the existence of the Law on Gender Equality in BiH, women continue to encounter discrimination in employment. They are more susceptible to job loss during periods of restructuring and reforms, making it challenging for

them to secure new employment. Single mothers or women who are the primary earners of their households face particularly vulnerable circumstances. Additionally, the educational attainment of women contributes to their disadvantaged position.

In the RS, a strategy aimed at enhancing the well-being of the elderly has been adopted, setting targets until 2028. Meanwhile, in the FBiH, efforts are underway to draft the Strategy for the Development of the Social and Child Protection System until 2030, which will encompass improvements in the position of the elderly. These strategies share a common vision that emphasizes the importance of valuing and utilizing the elderly as a valuable resource within the community, harnessing their capabilities and qualities. They also aim to establish a sustainable system of integrated services that promote healthy and active aging, enhancing the overall quality of life for older individuals. The strategies draw inspiration from key international frameworks, including the Madrid International Plan of Action on Aging (MIPAA) and the revised European Social Charter, which outline the obligations of states in respecting the rights of the elderly.

The European Union legislation adopted by BiH as an EU candidate brings several positive aspects, one of which is the improved accessibility of media content for individuals with disabilities. The Regulatory Communications Agency of BiH is actively engaged in implementing measures to incorporate new provisions into the regulatory framework. These provisions aim to ensure that a certain percentage of programs are made available in an accessible format for persons with disabilities. Initially, mandatory quotas were established for public broadcasting services in BiH, mandating a specific portion of programming to be accessible to individuals with disabilities as part of their licensing requirements. A similar provision is soon expected to become mandatory for other public and commercial TV stations as well. The introduction of binding quotas represents a significant step forward in enhancing the availability of media content that can be accessed by individuals with disabilities and developmental difficulties in BiH, which is currently at a low level of approximately 2%.

An example of good practice: Youth for the Elderly

The municipality of Prozor-Rama carries out activities on the promotion of socially useful activities among young people, with an emphasis on improving the quality of life of the elderly in need through the project “Youth for The Elderly,” implemented by the “Red Cross Prozor-Rama” Association, with the support of the ReLoad programme. One of the main goals of this project was to establish a Volunteer Service for Young People, and it resulted in ten young volunteers regularly visiting 16 elderly people in their homes to support them in doing

house chores, cooking meals, going for grocery shopping, visiting a doctor, socializing, and carrying out other activities. The project has successfully brought the young and the elderly together, promoting social cohesion and reducing isolation among the elderly. This initiative was very significant for the local community because care for the elderly in need is not at a satisfactory level in Prozor-Rama. A similar project, “Aging and Health,” is being implemented in the BD BiH, where the Red Cross provides help and home care services in more than 25 local communities for 120 beneficiaries supported by 12 caregivers.



Figure 36. Association «Red Cross Prozor-Rama» in the field

An example of good practice: Aging with dignity

The “Aging with Dignity” project was implemented by the Rudo Association of Parents of Four or More Children in cooperation with the Day Care Center and with the support of the ReLoaD2 project. The project aimed at contributing to the socialization of older people in the municipality of Rudo and creating opportunities for humane and continuous support to their lives, which resulted in creating a Day Care Center and defining a model of support for socially excluded beneficiaries, in this case persons over 60 years of age. By reducing social exclusion and isolation of the elderly, development is promoted and greater accessibility to the social protection network is provided. The implemented activities were well received and many expressed

interests in continuing the activities upon completion of the project. Additionally, the elderly caregivers are trained in working with the elderly and providing the necessary care services. Such projects are of great importance for smaller communities as they contribute to improving the position of socially excluded categories.

A similar project was implemented in the public institution Gerontology Center Banja Luka, in cooperation with the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports of the University of Banja Luka, and the Faculty of Sports and Physical Education - Novi Sad through the implementation of the initiative “Effects of the application of exercise programmes, supplementation and educational programmes for the improvement of physical fitness, biomarkers of health and quality of life in elderly people in Vojvodina and the RS.

Ensuring the right to work and employment, as well as access to healthcare, social protection, and education, continues to be a significant challenge for sustainable returns of displaced persons and returnees in BiH. The unemployment rate remains elevated, and there is a lack of reliable mechanisms to adequately address the needs of the working-age population, including returnees and displaced persons.



As mentioned in SDG 1, the authorities in BiH have implemented various measures through legal arrangements to address inequalities. In 2022, significant measures were introduced in RS and BD BiH to enhance support and access to benefits. These include granting maternity benefits to unemployed new mothers and providing support to unemployed parents with four or more children, where the parent opting to care for the children is entitled to a salary

equivalent to approximately 80% of the average RS salary. Additionally, in FBiH, the Law on Financial Support for Families with Children was enacted, enabling parents to receive child benefits amounting to 19% of the minimum FBiH salary, as well as cash assistance for unemployed mothers (and fathers) equivalent to 55% of the lowest FBiH salary. Furthermore, legislation now guarantees full salary to pregnant women and new mothers during temporary incapacity for work.

In BiH, a noticeable disparity exists between urban and rural areas, with urban residents enjoying better conditions in terms of employment rates, education, and access to public infrastructure, among other indicators. To address this gap, both entities, as well as cantons and municipalities, have implemented support measures aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas.

Presently, economic indicators indicate a slow process of economic convergence, with the living

standards of BiH citizens significantly lower than the EU average. According to the BiH Agency for Statistics, which released the findings of the European Price and GDP Comparison Programme, the GDP per capita in BiH in 2021, measured in BAM, amounted to only 33% of the EU average. Similarly, the actual individual consumption per capita, expressed in purchasing power standards (PPS), stood at 41% of the EU average during the same period.

Target 10.1: By 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 10.1.1.a: Income Inequality Gini Coefficient		N/A
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 10.1.1.b: Account ownership at a financial institution		N/A
Target 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 10.4.1: Ratio of minimum net wages to average wages		The ratio of minimum wages to average net wages in 2022 was 0.55 in the FBiH and 0.53 in the RS. Target values for 2023 were reached in both entities and the BD BiH (FBiH=0.47; RS=0.51).
Target 10.c: By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%		
SDG indicator 10.c.1: Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted		The observed indicator refers to the need to reduce the transaction costs of migrant remittances. The transaction costs of remittances increased in 2021 (6.9%) compared to the baseline value from 2018 (6.5%), and it is not expected that the target value for 2023 (5.0%) will be reached.

At the end of 2021, the FBiH Government established a methodology for determining and aligning the minimum wage level. According to this methodology, the minimum monthly wage for full-time employees must not fall below 55%

of the average monthly net wages in the FBiH. The implementation of this methodology commenced in 2022, with the aim of reaching the target by 2030. In addition to adjusting the minimum wage with an average wage, the methodology also

prescribes adjustments of wages with consumer prices and GDP, which is one of the ways of adjusting wages to the inflation that began in 2022.

An example of good practice: Dental clinic for persons with disabilities

“Colibri,” an association for support to families with children and persons with disabilities, ran a campaign to open a specialized dental practice for persons with disabilities in Sarajevo.

Children and adults with Down syndrome, autism or similar disabilities often require general anesthesia to undergo dental procedures, which in turn requires a well-equipped clinic designed to support those needs.

Colibri successfully ran a campaign to open a dental clinic for children with disabilities within the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Sarajevo. The Center has adequate space, an operating room, professional staff, and equipment that meet the specific needs of the persons with disabilities. Doctors from the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Sarajevo and anesthesiologists of the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo work together to provide specialized and adequate treatment to children with disabilities in need of such services.

An example of good practice: Youth Center “Vermont”

In 2015, the Youth Center “Vermont” Brčko, in cooperation with the international organization Save the Children, established a “drop-in center for children living and/or working on the street and children at risk of street involvement”, and the purpose is to contribute to providing the full access to the rights to this group of children who are exposed to various forms of labor exploitation, violence, some other form of exploitation, or children at risk of street involvement. The drop-in center brings together 142 children (permanent) and 247 registered members. It is a safe place for street involved children, where the child’s acute problem is urgently and adequately addressed. It also provides access to social and health care services and formal education, promotes and protects child

rights, provides psychosocial assistance and support to children who voluntarily use the services. As part of the drop-in center, a family support programme is implemented for the purpose of strengthening the role of women in society through training on human rights, human trafficking, psychosocial support, access to rights and greater competitiveness on the market.

Progress is visibly made in introducing social entrepreneurship through the laws on social entrepreneurship in the FBiH, RS and BD BiH, which are based on the principles of social inclusion and which help people who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion get the opportunity and resources needed for their full participation in the economic, social and cultural life and the achievement of a decent standard of living and well-being.



Figure 37. Drop-in center in Brčko



SDG 11. MAKING CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE

BiH is composed of 145 local government units, comprising municipalities and cities. Among these, 79 are located in the FBiH, 65 in the RS, and one in the BD BiH. Notably, several cities such as Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica, Bijeljina, and Mostar have a population exceeding 100,000, collectively accounting for over 25% of the country's total population.

The municipalities and cities in our country are responsible for the adoption and implementation of the planning documents (strategic and physical planning), housing policy, construction land and natural resource management, as well as for the provision of the essential services, such as community infrastructure, public cleanliness, water supply, municipal waste and wastewater management, public lighting, parking places, parks, and public transport. In addition, local government units are also responsible for the provision of preschool education services, financing and management of primary education institutions and culture, sports, essential health care and social care services. The municipalities and cities take



Figure 38. Promotion of clean, healthy, and sustainable environment in BiH

care of the safety of the people and property, including disaster prevention measures.

While the SDGs have a global reach, their impact is particularly evident at the local level, specifically within cities and local communities. In the context of BiH, the SDGs serve as a transformative agenda for local and cantonal authorities, aiming to enhance the overall quality of life for citizens. To effectively address the provision of services and tackle developmental challenges such as environmental pollution, natural disasters, climate change, poverty, and social exclusion, proactive measures are required from local and cantonal authorities. These measures involve strengthening development partnerships within their communities. These partnerships play a vital role in ensuring the alignment and coherence of local

policies with the SDGs. Moreover, they serve to raise awareness among citizens about how their individual or collective actions can contribute to the establishment of a better and sustainable society.

The implementation of an integrated approach to local development planning in BiH has a history of over 10 years. Municipalities and cities throughout the country have implemented various mechanisms to engage citizens in the development planning processes, with the aim of enhancing transparency, social inclusion, gender equality, disaster management, and sustainability. As a result of an improved planning and implementation system for development priorities, there has been an increasing level of implementation of development strategies.

With regard to the protection of the procedural public rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the UNECE and OSCE-supported activities are implemented and monitored in BiH under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation

in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register.²⁸ To promote participatory and inclusive local environmental management, the Aarhus centers were established in Banja Luka, Tuzla, Sarajevo and Zenica.²⁹

Although local government units in BiH are facing many challenges in achieving sustainable development, there is also significant progress and a number of good practices.

An example of good practice: Urban Lab digital platform

Urban Lab is the first virtual tool of its kind for the citizen-led transformation of public spaces in BiH. It is designed as a tool that helps local authorities organize interactive public consultations and collect citizen ideas about the renewal and regeneration of public spaces - such as streets, neighborhoods, parks, squares, the places suffering from urban decline, etc.

This tool gives citizens a stronger voice in reimagining public spaces towards greener, more resilient, and comfortable cities. The digital platform was developed as part of the “Imagine My Street” initiative, implemented by the Municipality of Sarajevo Center, the City of Sarajevo, and the University of Sarajevo, in cooperation with UNDP.

Cultural heritage as a sustainable development resource


Preservation of cultural and natural heritage is one of the important responsibilities of municipalities and cities. Although the preservation of this heritage is a multifaceted and

complex endeavor with numerous benefits for society, no significant progress has been made in our country in allocation of financial resources per capita. The largest part of investment relates to the protection of cultural heritage, which accounts for 96.18% of the total costs of heritage.

28 <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports>

29 <https://aarhus.osce.org/bosnia-herzegovina>

Target 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 11.4.1: Total expenditure per capita spent on the conservation, protection, and preservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)		Total expenditure per capita spent on the conservation, protection, and preservation of all cultural and natural heritage in BiH for 2020 was 27.70 BAM per capita, which is 8.7% less than the corrected 2019 baseline value. Additional efforts are required to reach the target value for 2023 (48.00 BAM/pc).

An example of good practice: Inter-sectoral contribution of culture to sustainable urban development

The City of Sarajevo was awarded the UNESCO City of Film status and thus joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in recognition of its promotion of culture and creativity for sustainable development, in accordance with Agenda 2030.

By improving access to diverse film content throughout the year, increasing participation in the film culture for all citizens and creating new employment and skill development opportunities for both film professionals and young people, the City of Sarajevo represents that culture in all development areas, such as education, inclusiveness, the environment and economic growth, which is a valuable contribution to sustainable urban development.






Air quality

Regarding air pollution, urban citizens of BiH are exposed to significant air pollution levels in the winter as a result of outdated models of heating and cooking with solid fuels, coal-fired thermal power plants/heating plants, industry, and old vehicles.³⁰ Air quality is significantly impaired particularly by PM2.5 particulate matter and SO₂. Nonetheless, government authorities at all levels in our country are diligently working towards implementing the energy transition and decarbonization.

They are focused on enacting laws pertaining to renewable energy sources, introducing energy management practices, enhancing energy efficiency in both the public and private sectors through building retrofits, providing subsidies to facilitate the shift towards alternative energy sources, and incentivizing environmentally-friendly policies. The energy transition is an extensive and indispensable endeavor that necessitates unwavering commitment.

³⁰ Around 58% of total emissions coming from energy production result from the combustion of coal and peat, and 20% from the combustion of solid fuels and oil products, 9% emanate from industrial processes, 7–12% from transport, and a further 9% is from agriculture and 4% from waste.

Target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 11.6.1.a: Proportion of non-treated municipal waste		Although the proportion of untreated municipal waste is decreasing (23.5% in 2020), this decrease will not be sufficient for reaching the target value for 2023 (17%).
Alternative SDG indicator 11.6.1.b: Proportion of recycled municipal waste		According to the data for 2020, the proportion of recycled municipal waste in the total amount of collected waste in the country is 0.03%. The proportion of recycled municipal waste is decreasing, although it is increasing in absolute terms, so the target value for 2023 (15%) will not be reached.
SDG indicator 11.6.2: Air pollution, average concentration of PM2.5 (µg/m ³)		Distributed by annual average concentration of PM2.5 (µg/m ³), weighted by population based on available data, BiH, according to the World Air Quality Report, ranks 19 on the list of the most polluted countries in 2022 in the world with a concentration of 33, 6 µg/m ³ . In order to reach the target value for 2023 (21 µg/m ³), additional efforts are needed.

Over the last 5 years, no visible progress has been made towards using clean fuels and technologies and air quality remains one of the key challenges for BiH. As a result of the factors mentioned above, including environmental and air pollution, it is unsurprising that BiH has been ranked 19th on the list of the world's most polluted countries in 2022.

Sources of air pollution include heating and cooking with solid fuels, coal-fired thermal power plants, industry, and old vehicles. Around 58% of total emissions coming from energy production result from the combustion of coal and peat, and 20% from the combustion of solid fuels and oil products, 9% emanate from industrial processes, 7–12%

from transport, and a further 9% is from agriculture and 4% from waste. Air quality is significantly impaired particularly by PM2.5 particles and SO2. Currently, air quality monitoring stations exist at 17 different locations in BiH.

An example of good practice: Waste recycling in the Sarajevo Canton

The ongoing pilot project in Sarajevo, “Efficient Waste Management System in the Sarajevo Canton,” is financed by the Government of the Czech Republic and is implemented in cooperation between the international organization People in Need in BiH, the international company Dekonta, the public utility company Rad d.o.o. Sarajevo, and the municipalities in the Sarajevo Canton. A cleaner Sarajevo and environmental protection with an

increase in the volume of recycling and a decrease in the volume of waste disposed of at the Smiljevići Regional Landfill is the common goal of the aforementioned actors. The project provided the necessary equipment - bell containers, bins for individual residential buildings, green islands, and composters - in order to provide citizens with all the necessary conditions for waste sorting. By distributing composters to citizens, as much as 50% of municipal waste, which consists of bio-waste, will be managed. This waste can be composted, which allows farmers to reduce the costs of purchasing compost for their farms,

and at the same time slows down the filling of the Smiljevići landfill, which benefits all the residents of the Sarajevo Canton. An example of positive practice in Sarajevo Canton is the installation of recycling machines since August 2022. The point is that packaging waste is sorted in households and disposed of in an adequate manner, which directly reduces the total amount of waste deposited in containers and at the landfill, which, in turn, leads to a cleaner environment and an extension of the life of the landfill.

An example of good practice: Green cities

In 2021, the BD BiH joined the “Green Cities” programme supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) by signing a Memorandum between the District Government and the EBRD.

The Green Cities Action Plan, which is aligned with Agenda 2030, includes 134 specific indicators that are

developed according to the same methodology of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and implemented in 52 cities across Europe, and help define the specific priorities in eight basic areas and measures for the BD BiH development. The most important of those areas are air, soil and water protection, energy efficiency, decarbonization etc.

Housing conditions

Despite the unavailability of official data for indicator 11.1.1: Housing Conditions, institutions in BiH are actively striving to ensure suitable housing for all residents, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable individuals. In the period 2019-2023, BAM 407 million-worth infrastructure projects for Roma housing have been implemented, of which 92% has been provided by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH (MHRR), and the rest has been provided by the local communities. This project encompasses 1,675 beneficiaries, aiming to enhance living conditions

in Roma settlements by enhancing road infrastructure, street lighting, sewage networks, and constructing staircases and pathways accessible to individuals with disabilities. During the same timeframe, a combined total of 1.5 million BAM from the MHRR funds and 1.1 million BAM co-financed by local communities and Swiss Caritas were allocated to Roma housing. These funds were utilized for renovating and constructing 63 residential structures, benefiting a total of 1,675 individuals.

It is important to emphasize that the implementation of the project “Collective Center and Alternative Accommodation Closure through

Public Housing Arrangements” is underway. It is financed based on the Framework Loan Agreement between the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and BiH. The project is implemented in 46 local communities. By March 2023, the works on the construction of buildings within 37 sub-projects were completed, providing 1,026 housing units in which 1,026 families have already moved. The sub-project for the construction of 25 residential buildings for 831 families is ongoing.

An example of good practice: ZERO Waste Municipalities

Since 2021, the ZERO Waste Municipalities project has been implemented by the Center for Energy, Environment and Resources - CENER 21 from Sarajevo (BiH) and the Environmental Engineering Group - EEG from Novi Sad (Serbia).

It is financed within the IPA cross-border cooperation programme Serbia - BiH 2014-2020. Its main purpose is to achieve long-term resource efficiency in the waste management sector in the cross-border area. By implementing joint activities based on the principles of zero waste and circular economy,

the project aims to strengthen sustainable development in over 90 municipalities in the region.

The project activities include the creation of “Zero Waste Action Plans”, the preparation of technical investment documentation for the concept of zero waste, the creation of interactive GIS maps with locations of illegal landfills, the implementation of training programmes for representatives of the utility companies responsible for waste management and local community representatives on separate waste collection, organizing a joint study visit to the Regional Center for Waste Management in Maribor, Slovenia, and purchasing and installing equipment to improve waste management services and

increase recycling. This includes the procurement of containers for dry recyclable waste, containers for other mixed wastes and compost for organic, wet household waste, as well as the cleaning of selected illegal landfills and the installation of waste containers with a capacity of 7m³.

The public sector is involved in the project implementation through the active participation of public companies for waste management and schools in the target cross-border area.



SDG 12. ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

The circular economy serves as a key pillar within the strategic framework of the European Green Deal, which aims to foster a climate-neutral, resource-efficient, and competitive economy. In line with this, the EU has developed the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, along with implementation guidelines, with a strong emphasis on transitioning towards a circular economy. For BiH, a country in the early stages of transitioning to a functional market economy, the circular economy presents a significant development opportunity. In BiH, the growth of resource productivity was moderate between 2015 and 2019, while in 2016 there was a drop in productivity due to a significant increase in domestic consumption of materials. The year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 crisis which caused a drop in resource productivity, especially due to a drop in GDP compared to relatively equal domestic consumption. In 2020, the BiH economy consumed 40.5 million tons of natural resources, which was 9.8% more than in 2015. Domestic extraction of non-metallic

minerals increased by around 25.8% compared to 2015. According to the data of the Agency for Statistics of BiH, approximately 11.7 tons of agricultural crops, minerals, metals, and fossil fuels were consumed per inhabitant of BiH in 2020, i.e., 32 kg of these resources were consumed per inhabitant daily.

Regarding waste management in BiH, there has been a noticeable stagnation in the growth of municipal waste quantity (1.2 million tons) in the previous period. However, the per capita waste production has increased by 6% (in 2021) compared to 2010, despite a decrease in the overall population. Waste management services cover approximately 74% of the population, with coverage varying significantly between urban areas (80-90% coverage) and rural areas (40-45% coverage).³¹ The coverage of the population with waste collection services has experienced only minimal growth over the years, primarily due to infrastructural and operational limitations. Addressing this issue necessitates substantial investments and additional funding. The waste that remains uncollected contributes to the proliferation of illegal landfills. There are more than 1,300 illegal landfills³² within the territory of BiH and their number

continues to increase, despite a slight increase in the population covered by waste collection services and various initiatives to close such landfills. Furthermore, the separate collection of waste has not been systematically solved, which is mainly a consequence of the absence or insufficient recycling facilities.³³ In addition to the lack of waste sorting and recycling facilities, there are no financial incentives for citizens to sort their waste, and there is very low public awareness of the need for proper waste management. On the industry side, limited amounts of industrial and hazardous waste are rehabilitated and reused. According to data from 2018, only 10%³⁴ of industrial waste is used as secondary raw material.

Conversely, businesses in BiH acknowledge the significance and advantages of adopting a circular economy model for their operations. According to a survey conducted among 338 companies, 61% of them express readiness to shift towards conducting business in alignment with circular economy principles. Moreover, over 80% of these companies recognize the importance and positive impact of the circular economy on the growth and progress of their business.


31 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-management/municipal-waste-management-country/bosnia-and-herzegovina-municipal-waste/view>

32 <https://cci.ba/media/1/39/579.html>

33 <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-management/municipal-waste-management-country/bosnia-and-herzegovina-municipal-waste/view>

34 Municipal Waste Management – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Country Fact Sheet, European Environment Agency, Sept 2018

Target 12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 12.6.1: Number of companies publishing sustainability reports		The number of companies publishing sustainability reports increased from two companies in 2019 to 11 companies in 2023. The target value for 2023, set in the Framework, is 30.

The number of companies in BiH that are actively involved in preparing and publishing annual sustainability reports has experienced significant growth. This upward trend can be attributed to various factors, including the requirements imposed by foreign markets on suppliers from BiH, particularly in the Nordic countries. Additionally, the introduction of the SDG Business Pioneers Award in BiH has also played a role in driving this increase. Under this initiative, companies that undergo the application process and achieve finalist status in their respective category or thematic area are provided with a draft annual report annex. This annex, which follows the GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) indicators, is recognized by the UN Global Compact as part of the company’s membership application process.

Efficient use of resources in industry, waste management and the transition to a circular economy are included in entity strategic documents until 2027 (the Industrial Development Strategy of the RS 2021-

2027 and the FBiH Development Strategy 2021-2027), the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) 2030 at different levels of government, the Economic Reform Programme of BiH 2023-2025.

In 2022, BiH initiated the process of creating the first Circular Economy Roadmap in order to move away from a linear economic model towards a model that prevents the loss of biodiversity, climate change and depletion of natural resources. The Roadmap 2030 lays down the strategic foundations for systematic change and enables a long-term transition towards a circular economy, encouraging future changes in the regulatory framework and mobilization of investments in industry, enterprises and supporting infrastructure. The Roadmap envisages the initiation of the transition to a circular economy in three priority sectors: production sectors (production, supply, distribution and use of products and services (textile industry, leather and footwear industry, wood processing and metal processing sectors),

construction and agricultural and food sectors.

The project aimed at addressing the issue of hazardous waste in the Tuzla region, particularly the Chlorine Alkaline Complex (HAK) and the contaminated soil in the Tuzla industrial zone, commenced in 2023. The FBiH Government has allocated 2 million BAM to support the rehabilitation and removal of the significant landfill within the complex. This landfill is considered one of the most pressing environmental challenges in the FBiH region. Over the years, the chemical industry in Tuzla generated hazardous waste that was inadequately disposed of, leading to its accumulation at this site. A study conducted by the Ministry of Physical Planning and Environmental Protection of the Tuzla Canton confirmed that the presence of the crux and other chemical compounds in the area poses a health risk to the local population, as the waste was buried near the Jala riverbed.

TARGETS



Circulate products and materials at their highest-value, while decoupling economic activity from the consumption of resources



Support for sustainable use of natural resources and regeneration of natural systems

GOALS

Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission intensity (tones of CO2 equivalent) per unit of GDP by 20% compared to the levels in 2020

Reuse at least 30% of industrial waste as secondary raw materials

Reduce production and use of single-use packaging, plastic and toxic materials by at least 25%, compared to consumption levels in 2020

Increase domestic production and use of recyclable products and products with a higher share of recycled material by 30%, compared to production levels in 2020

Increase the use of resilient and regenerative practices of natural resource management in all regions in BiH by at least 10%, compared to the levels in 2020

OBJECTIVES

Support to creation of a business environment that encourages circular economy

Circularity in business operations

Industrial symbiosis and industrial value chains under a closed loop model

Innovation and digital transformation in commercial/trade and industrial value chains

Supply and circulation of products for reusing, low-carbon, biodegradable and recyclable products

Business practices are in accordance with sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems

An example of good practice: Reducing CO2 emissions

The Kakanj cement factory is aware of its responsibility towards the environment and its local community, therefore it complies with all relevant environmental laws at all levels of government. At the

local level, the Kakanj Redukcija factory is an example of good practice in reducing CO2 emissions - using alternative fuels (waste fuel). Currently, the factory has produced approximately 10% of the total energy for clinker production from alternative fuels (AF), and the target is to increase production to 30% by 2030. To achieve the set target,

the factory is implementing two projects (storage for used tires RDF). Additionally, the factory reduced all other air emissions (SO₂, NO_x, HCl, HF, PCDD/F, heavy metals) by several tens to several hundreds of times compared to GVE, thanks to the application of BAT techniques.



Figure 39. Cement Factory Kakanj

Based in Brčko, BIMAL Group is a leader in the processing of oilseeds and grains both in the country and the region, whose operations include processing, production, trade, storage, and business park services. The BIMAL d.d. was certified

according to the ISCC EU standard in 2013, which specifically aims at meeting the EU regulations and is applied to seed processing and the production of crude oils for further processing and production of biodiesel. In 2021, the BIMAL boiler

plant received a modern, reliable, and efficient biomass boiler room (sunflower husk, woodchips) with all supporting facilities. This boiler house is the first biomass boiler room in the Agro-Industrial Complex of STUDEN Holding.



SDG 13. TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

BiH, as one of the member countries of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, is included in the process of mid-term review of progress in DRR. The findings of the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework in BiH show progress towards achieving the aims, priorities

for action and targets of the Sendai Framework, as well as the likelihood of their full implementation by 2030. BiH is actively transitioning from a reactive to a proactive approach in disaster management, placing greater emphasis on risk prevention and mitigation. Significant strides have been made in the country to adopt a comprehensive approach that integrates risk reduction and resilience-building across various development sectors. The majority of implemented initiatives are centered around disaster management, reflecting the commitment to address risks and enhance preparedness for potential disasters.

Furthermore, the relevant institutions have carried out initiatives with the goal of enhancing local disaster response plans. These efforts encompassed the development of informative manuals and brochures at the level of local government units, as well as training programs designed for local community leaders and incident command staff. Additionally, together with UNDP, collaborative activities have been undertaken to establish flood prevention plans, thereby strengthening the overall preparedness and resilience of the region.

An example of good practice: Inclusive and regenerative green economy

Established in October 2022, the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition operates within the global Generation Equality initiative, launched in BiH last year.³⁵ This is the fourth in a series of Action Coalitions launched as part of the initiative and its five-year goals aim at supporting more equal participation of girls

and women in deciding on plans and measures for climate mitigation and adaptation and a more inclusive approach and social dialogue on the transition to a regenerative economy.

The Coalition works through periodic meetings of the working body which issues recommendations to the relevant institutions, non-governmental and academic sectors, or relevant actors to improve the general goals of the Coalition in BiH. The Coalition has prepared a report that maps the already existing

statistical data through various statistical surveys and administrative data and identifies the potential sources of data which would provide the relevant information to be used for making decisions and creating policies related to the gender and environmental impacts. The report is important also in terms of mapping gender in legal acts in BiH in order to recognize whether the gender equality component is incorporated into the legislation governing the environment and climate change.

35 The Coalition was formed through partnership of the Gender Equality Agency of the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees with UNDP and UN Women. <https://forum.generationequality.org/action-coalitions>

An example of good practice: The Vrbas River Basin

The “Vrbas River Basin” project was implemented in 9 local government units in the Vrbas River Basin (Srbac, Laktaši, Banja Luka, Čelinac, Kotor Varoš, Jezero, Mrkonjić Grad, Kupres and Šipovo). The local working

groups were formed for the purpose of developing a Flood Protection Plan and the Flood Awareness Raising Plan was implemented as part of the project. Short leaflets with flood safety tips were printed and an exercise involving all the project local government units was organized. Radio-relay devices were

installed, covering the entire territory of the regional chapter of the RS Civil Protection Authority Banja Luka, i.e., 21 local communities, with the VHF radio network. This helped largely improve the communication system. At the same time, early warning and siren alarm systems were installed.



Figure 40. The River Vrbas

Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
SDG indicator 13.1.2: Proportion of local governments that adopted disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.	➔	The period 2019-2022 is characterized by the beginning of the process of harmonizing local development strategies with the Sendai Framework. In that period, 7 local government strategies were fully aligned with the Sendai Framework, while 33 strategies were partially aligned. Looking at full compliance with the Sendai Framework, currently 5% of strategies are compliant, which is far less than the 2023 target of 50%, so we can conclude that the target will not be met.



SDG 15. PROTECT, RESTORE, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Biological diversity means the diversity of living organisms that live on land and in water. Under the subject-matter of the research, we can distinguish three types of diversity: genetic diversity, and diversity of species and diversity of ecosystems. The decades-long practice of protecting individual species without protecting their habitats has proven to be poorly effective. At the international level, the Berne Convention (1979), the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992), together with their annexes, represent the main instruments for the protection of the habitats of endangered species.

Based on the currently accessible data, which considers the number of documented species and the overall land area, BiH stands among the European countries boasting the

highest level of biological diversity. Notably, the nation showcases an extensive range of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, coupled with a remarkable abundance of plant, animal, and fungal species.

The totality of biotic and abiotic factors of the BiH area leads to the presence of many developing endemic centers. According to data from the Fifth National Communication, BiH is home to over 5,000 described taxa, of which around 30% is the endemic flora of the Balkans (1,800 species). As an example of the specificity and importance of some rare species in our country today, we can mention the following species: Pančić spruce (Lat. *Picea omorika*, 1887), Croatian sibiraea (Lat. *Sibiraea altaiensis* (Laxm.) C. K. Schneid. ssp. *croatica* (Degen) Degen, 1905), Sutjeska's rockbell (lat. *Edraianthus sutjeskae*, Lakušić, 2010), the olm (Lat. *Proteus anguinus*, Laurenti, 1768).

Protected areas play a vital role in sustaining life on Earth due to their captivating natural beauty and abundant variety of plant and animal species. Beyond safeguarding diverse habitats and their inhabitants, these areas hold immense significance for regional progress, profoundly influencing the economic well-being of the local communities residing within them.³⁶ Unfortunately, due to insufficient research efforts, limited transparency in published findings, and divergent typological classifications of plant and animal

habitats, reliable and precise data on the specific number of organism groups remains elusive. Unlike several international classifications such as Physis, CORINE, and EUNIS, BiH lacks a unified classification system for habitat types, further complicating the situation.

The BiH ESAP 2030+ initiative is currently in progress, facilitating the allocation of funds to enhance the comprehensive understanding of biodiversity within our country. Concurrently, the implementation of the IPBES project titled "Supporting decision-making and building capacity through national ecosystem assessments" is underway in BiH. A significant segment of this project focuses on identifying and addressing the challenges faced by nature in BiH. The project aligns with the guidelines established by the "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – IPBES."

While the previous global target sought to protect 17% of land and 10% of coastal and marine areas in each country, the current level of protection in FBiH stands at 4%. In FBiH, there are 12 designated protected areas, including one national park, four natural monuments, two nature parks, and five protected landscapes. The most recent addition to the list is the protected landscape of Vjetrenica – Popovo Polje.³⁷

36 https://fzobih.org.ba/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ISO_FBiH_izvijestaj.pdf

37 <https://www.fmoit.gov.ba/upload/file/2020/Eday/Federalna%20strategija%20za%20za%C5%A1tite%20okoli%C5%A1a%202022-2032..pdf>

The RS has designated 32 protected areas, which account for 2.8% of the total territory. These protected areas include two strict nature reserves, three national parks, 16 natural monuments, three protected habitats, five protected landscapes, cultural landscapes, nature parks,



and three protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources.³⁸

The BD BiH does not yet have any designated protected areas.

Based on data from the entity strategies, it is estimated that the

percentage of protected areas in BiH is approximately 3.37%.

In addition to the need to increase the percentage of protected areas, it is also important to preserve already declared protected areas.

Target 15.1: By 2030, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains, and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements		
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 15.1.2.b: Percentage of protected areas (%)		Observing the trend in the last 10 years, the percentage of protected areas in BiH, although it increased from 2.07 (2013) to 3.37 (2022), will not reach the target value for 2023 (7.0).
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 15.1.2.c: Number of mine-suspected areas		The number of mine-suspected areas was reduced from 478 (2019) to 466 (2021), which is still insufficient to reach the target value for 2023 (350).

Despite significant efforts in mine clearance, BiH continues to face a significant mine and explosive contamination issue. The surveying and clearing of contaminated areas and the subsequent land release are closely tied to the SDGs, as minefields in BiH have wide-ranging socioeconomic, humanitarian,

commercial, and ecological impacts. To address this challenge, the BiH Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025 was adopted in 2019, with plans for a review in 2023.

In 2021, twelve tasks were completed, resulting in the release of an area measuring 20,859,470 square meters.

During these operations, a total of 2,900 mines and 722 Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs) were discovered and safely destroyed. As of January 2022, mine clearance operations are underway in twenty-five mine-suspected areas, covering an area of 46 square kilometers.

An example of good practice: Let's Do It

The "Let's Do It" project in BiH, which is implemented by the Sarajevo-based Citizen Association "Ruke" and the Banja Luka-based Citizen Association "Mosaic of Friendship,"

has engaged 206,981 volunteers since 2012 to clean up illegal landfills and plant trees. Volunteers removed around 16,370 tons of waste and planted 485,716 different tree seedlings.

The project organized two volunteer actions – "Let's Do It - Clean the

Country in One Day" and "Let's Do It - One Million Seedlings in 1 Day" - in 115 municipalities and planned to include all municipalities in BiH. The project is part of the global movement "Let's Do It World" with 113 participating countries and over 18,000,000 volunteers.



SDG 16. PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE, AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Reforms in the areas of rule of law, fundamental rights, and good governance remain crucial challenges for the Western Balkan countries, including BiH. Strong institutions, a professional civil service, and citizen-centric public services are key to effective crisis



management and creating an enabling environment for private sector growth, poverty reduction, and delivering tangible results to citizens. However, like many other countries worldwide, BiH has faced numerous global challenges that have slowed down the implementation of reforms.

To track progress, the World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators have been used as a proxy indicator, monitoring six specific governance indicators. Unfortunately, according to the latest data from 2021, BiH has not made significant progress, highlighting the need for additional efforts to achieve the set targets.

Despite the challenges and slower pace of progress, different levels of government in BiH have continued to implement various activities aimed at enhancing the efficiency, inclusiveness, and accountability

of the public sector. The reforms within SDG 16 are largely aligned with BiH’s integration process into the European Union, and they are addressed in numerous strategic documents, including the Comprehensive Strategy for Public Finance Management in BiH 2021-2025 and the Strategic Framework of Public Administration Reform.

In terms of sovereign credit ratings, Moody’s Investors Service affirmed BiH’s rating at “B3 with stable outlook” in July 2022, while Standard & Poor’s Agency assigned a rating of “B with positive outlook” in February 2023. These ratings are based on contracts signed by BiH with these international rating agencies for sovereign credit rating reporting and monitoring.

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative indicator 16.6.1: Worldwide governance indicators: 1. Voice and Accountability 2. Political Stability 3. Government Effectiveness 4. Regulatory Quality 5. Rule of Law 6. Control of Corruption		In 2021, compared to 2016, BiH experienced a setback on five out of six indicators.
Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative indicator 16.6.3: Credit rating (S&P)		After the analyses, in February 2023, the Standard & Poor’s agency affirmed BiH’s sovereign credit rating “B with positive outlook”.

Although there is a lack of available data on citizen satisfaction with public services in BiH, particularly regarding the methodology for the specific indicator mentioned, a survey conducted in 2020 in 17 local communities³⁹ provides some insights. The survey indicates a decrease in the level of citizen dissatisfaction with services and infrastructure provided by local

governments, particularly in relation to administrative and utility services. When compared to the value recorded in 2016 through the same survey, which stood at 35%, the repeated survey in 2020 revealed a decline in the rate of citizen dissatisfaction with local-level services and infrastructure to 23%. This suggests a certain improvement in the quality and accessibility of

public services and infrastructure at the local level.

In the past two years, several initiatives focused on digitalizing public administration and enhancing service delivery to citizens have been initiated in BiH. Below are a few examples of successful practices that could serve as models for other areas or regions.

An example of good practice: e-Baby

The goal of the project “e-Baby (2021-2022)” was to facilitate the civil registration of newborns. This pilot project was implemented in the Sarajevo Center Municipality. The project was initiated by the Office of the Public Administration Reform Coordinator and implemented

in cooperation with the Sarajevo Center Municipality, the General Hospital “Prof. dr. Abdulah Nakaš” and the Agency for Identification Documents, Records and Data Exchange of BiH. This project made it possible for parents to register the birth of their children more easily. According to data of the Center Municipality, more than 600 babies have been registered in this

way since the launch of the system. The RS government made it possible to parents to register a birth of a child electronically by establishing the “e-baby” information system by enabling the electronic exchange of data between the health institutions (maternity hospitals) and the RS institutions responsible for keeping citizen records.

An example of good practice: A One-Stop Shop for Business

In 2018, the RS Government established an electronic one-stop

shop at the Ministry of the Economy and Entrepreneurship in order to make the information on how to start up and provide service activities available to persons interested in providing services.

This portal contains a comprehensive list of services with activity codes that make up a special group of economic activities, thus speeding up the process.

An example of good practice: eCitizen


An online platform eCitizen was developed with the support of the Municipal Environmental Governance Project. This platform, together with a mobile application, enables effective communication between local government and citizens. Through available modules for communication with the local administration, citizens have the opportunity to participate in public debates on policy and budget planning, annual surveys on satisfaction with utility services,

and ask questions and request information on such services. eCitizen is implemented in almost 30% of local governments across the country.

Although formally under SDG 17, an additional indicator that is monitored in the context of administration refers to the strengthening of statistical systems. Our country is stagnating when it comes to progress in achieving the target, and additional efforts are needed at all levels of government to improve the availability and quality of statistical data.



39 Municipal Environmental Governance Project (MEG). The local government units where the citizen public service and infrastructure dissatisfaction survey was conducted: Bihać, Bosanska Krupa, Cazin, Dobo, Gračanica, Gradačac, Gradiška, Kalesija, Kozarska Dubica, Kostajnica, Prijedor, Prnjavor, Sanski Most, Teslić, Tešanj, Tuzla and Žepče. <https://www.undp.org/bs/bosnia-herzegovina/projects/meg-2-projekat>

Indicator	Trend	Description of trend
Alternative SDG indicator 17.19.2: Strengthening the statistical system		Based on the latest data from the World Bank, there has been a decline in performance in certain areas compared to the base year of 2018 in BiH. Specifically, the assessment of source data received a score of 50 in 2020, while the assessment of periodicity and timeliness received a score of 60. The methodological assessment of statistical capacities, however, remained at the same level as in 2018 with a score of 70. It is unlikely that the target values set for 2023, which were 75 for the assessment of source data, 70 for the assessment of periodicity and timeliness, and 75 for the methodological assessment of statistical capacities, will be achieved. Furthermore, due to changes in the methodology for monitoring this indicator, it is necessary to establish new target values.



SDG 17. STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

During the period between the two Voluntary National Reviews, BiH actively participated in regional meetings and conferences, presenting its progress and results in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). BiH also took the initiative to foster regional cooperation and the exchange of best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of Agenda 2030. The goal was to promote an intense exchange of experiences and interactive discussions to find solutions and improve activities across the countries in the region.

In 2021, BiH initiated the first expert meeting of the Western Balkan countries on SDG implementation, which took place in Sarajevo on November 29-30. It was decided during the meeting to organize regular annual meetings until 2030. The participants openly discussed achievements, challenges, and the organization of institutions involved in the SDG implementation process,

as well as the cooperation between different levels of government. As planned, the second conference was held in December 2022 in Budva, Montenegro, where the exchange of experiences continued. BiH actively presented its efforts in localizing the SDG implementation process. Additionally, in July 2022, BiH participated in a meeting organized by Montenegro on the sidelines of the High-Level Political Forum in New York, where traditional regional consultations were conducted.

Each year, BiH actively engages in the UNECE Regional Forum in Geneva, showcasing its annual activities related to the implementation of the SDGs during plenary sessions and actively participating in roundtable discussions. In Geneva, by the end of 2021, the Council, along with representatives from the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, held discussions on future collaboration in implementing Agenda 2030 with representatives from UNCTAD, UNECE, OHCHR, and other organizations.

During its Chairmanship of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and EUSAIR, BiH hosted a regional conference titled “Midterm Evaluation on the Implementation of the SDGs in All Region” in Banja Luka. This conference brought together representatives from 10 countries of the Initiative, as well as

academia, the private sector, and local communities, all focused on the implementation of the SDGs. The conference aimed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and enhance preparations for the Regional Forum in Geneva and the upcoming Sustainable Development Summit in New York, showcasing BiH’s commitment to these processes.

Furthermore, BiH actively participated in conferences organized by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) on SDG implementation in Southeast Europe, held in Thessaloniki and Istanbul.

At the initiative of BiH, in 2021 the Central European Initiative, a forum of 17 member states, organized a meeting related to the exchange of experiences in the implementation of Agenda 2030, where BiH was one of the three countries that presented the history of its activities.

In May 2022, the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers reported on BiH’s progress in the implementation of the Global Compact for safe, orderly, and regular migration (GCM) at the first International Migration Review Forum. By signing the Progress Declaration, BiH confirmed its commitment to cooperation on international migration in all its dimensions.

At the global level, representatives from BiH actively engaged in the “UNOSD 2022 Sustainable Development Transformation” forum, which took place in October 2022 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. During the forum, BiH presented the concept of localizing the implementation process of Agenda 2030, sparking extensive discussions. BiH further participated actively in the Global Workshop for the Voluntary National Reviews held in Turin in December 2022.

Additionally, BiH made valuable contributions to the Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of

the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, highlighting its commitment to enhancing disaster resilience and reducing risk.

The Human Rights Report highlights an additional crucial concern that should be taken into account in all discussions and initiatives regarding socio-economic policies. It emphasizes the significance of internal migration, which stands as the second most prominent demographic trend alongside emigration. A noticeable pattern emerges, with individuals migrating from economically disadvantaged and less developed regions to

more prosperous ones, as well as from rural to urban areas offering greater employment opportunities, improved infrastructure, better services, and a higher standard of living. Consequently, this leads to evident spatial disparities, perpetuated by the management of public administration and public finances, wherein less mobile and more vulnerable population groups are left behind in areas lacking sufficient resources.

7. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The adoption of the Framework defined a path that connects all levels of government in BiH in their efforts to ensure a more sustainable, inclusive, and green future for future generations. BiH's efforts to create good governance, a society that provides equal opportunities to all and the environment for smart growth, which lies at the heart of Agenda 2030, and to implement the necessary reforms required by the European integration process have been slowed down due to many challenges.

BiH faced global challenges which have slowed down progress in the largest number of countries of the world, causing a crisis in health systems, disruptions in food and energy supply chains, as well as record-high inflation.

BiH also faces internal challenges regarding the successful implementation of Agenda 2030, including the need to strengthen intersectoral coordination and the systemic implementation of sustainable development policies. Additional efforts are needed to integrate the concept of sustainability into all the pores of society, from development measures of institutions to business models of the private sector, to behavior

at the community and individual levels. This includes an increased participation of women in socio-economic life, which presupposes the balance between the private and business life and the promotion of shared responsibility in the household and family.

Bearing in mind that the energy sector in BiH is highly dependent on coal which is used to generate more than 60% of electric power in the country, the primary challenge is the green transition process. The use of fossil fuels contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating the impacts of climate change. However, BiH has a significant potential of renewable energy sources, including solar, wind and hydro energy. Investing in these energy sources would reduce emissions, improve the air quality, and create jobs in the renewable energy sector.









Digitalization is another recognized sustainable development accelerator in BiH, especially in combination with the strengthening of research potential. The country has a well-educated population, and investment in digital infrastructure and research and development would help create jobs in the technology sector, create a more competitive economy and reduce



energy consumption.













Public funds are the most important source of financing sustainable development, but there is room for better focusing on spheres that create sustainable positive changes. In our country and the rest of the world, public finance is insufficient for the implementation of Agenda 2030, which is why efforts are made to introduce innovative ways of financing and strengthen development partnerships. At the same time, it is necessary to take care that all future policies and measures address the needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population which are most often and most severely affected by crises. The health sector reform, along with the improvement of the quality of services and physical and economic access to health care, and the reforms of the education and social protection systems therefore remain among the priorities of all levels of government in BiH.
















Now, halfway to 2030, BiH is committed to making maximum efforts and contributing to the implementation of the biggest and most important agenda of modern times.












ANNEX 1. OVERVIEW OF SDG INDICATORS, TARGETS AND RESULTS















INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
					
	Alternative SDG indicator 1.1.1: Poverty rate, global poverty line	3.9	N/A	3	0
	Alternative SDG indicator 1.2.1: Poverty rate at the state/entity level	16.9	N/A	15	8.5
	Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina	17.6	N/A	13.2	8.8
	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	17.1	N/A	12.9	8.6
	Republika Srpska	16.4	N/A	12.3	8.2
	SDG indicator 1.4.1. a: Access to basic services, % (1.4.1.a Water supply)	88.6	N/A	93	96*
	SDG indicator 1.4.1. b: Access to basic services, % (1.4.1.b Sanitation)	23.1	N/A	75	89*













INDICATOR	Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
 2 ZERO HUNGER					
↓	Adjusted SDG indicator 2.1.2: Food insecurity in adult population, %	9.6	12.6 (2020)	5	0
↓	SDG indicator 2.2.1: Proportion of children moderately or seriously stunted	10.2 (2015)	9.1 (2020)	5	0
 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING					
→	SDG indicator 3.2.1: Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births	5.8 (2018)	5.7 (2020)	5.1	2.5
↑	SDG indicator 3.2.2: Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births (under one year of age)	5 (2018)	4.6 (2020)	4.5	3.8
↓	Adjusted SDG indicator 3.4.1: Non-communicable disease mortality rate (per 1,000 population) - Total	18.2 (2015)	18.7	16.4	12.1
	- Women (3.4.1.a)	13.2 (2015)	13.6	11.1	8.8
	- Men (3.4.1.b)	23.1 (2015)	24	19.8	15.7
↓	SDG indicator 3.5.2: Alcohol abuse, defined in the national context as consumption of alcohol per capita (at the age of 15 and older) during a calendar year in liters of pure alcohol	6.43 (2016)	7.81 (2020)	5.3	4
→	SDG indicator 3.6.1: Mortality rate due to traffic injuries per 100,000 population	15.7 (2016)	13.5 (2019)	11.5	6.4
→	SDG indicator 3.7.2: Adolescent birth rate (aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group	11 (2016)	10.1	8.7	4.9

INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	SDG indicator 3.8.1: Coverage of essential health care services	61 (2014)	65	69	75
	3.8.1.a Proportion of population with household expenditures on health (greater than 10%) of total household expenditure or income	8.18 (2015)	N/A	6.5	4
	3.8.1.b Proportion of population with household expenditures on health (greater than 25%) of total household expenditure or income	1.39	N/A	0.5	0
	SDG indicator 3.a.1: Prevalence of current tobacco use among persons (aged 15 and over)				
	- Total	39.3 (2011)	38.3	31	25
	- Women (3.a.1.b)	30.5 (2011)	30.2	24	20
	- Men (3.a.1.c)	48.4 (2011)	46.3	39	31
	Adjusted SDG indicator 3.c.1: Health worker density and distribution per 10,000 population				
	- Dentists	2.31 (2014)	2.3 (2020)	5.3	7.2
	- Nurses	63 (2014)	41.1 (2020)	69.1	75.5
	- Pharmacists	1.24 (2014)	1.5 (2020)	2.1	5.9
	- Medical doctors	20 (2013)	23.3 (2020)	22.5	24.8














INDICATOR	Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
					
	Alternative SDG indicator 4.1.1. a: Average number of years of education				
	- Women	8.5 (2018)	9,8 (2021)	10.2	12.1
	- Men	10.9 (2018)	11,4 (2021)	11.7	12.4
	Alternative SDG indicator 4.1.1.b: Proportion of girls and boys aged 15+ who performed at or above PISA Level 2 in reading, mathematics, and science				
	- Reading	46	N/A	55	70
	- Mathematics	42	N/A	55	70
	- Science	43	N/A	55	70
	Adjusted SDG indicator 4.2.2: Enrollment in pre-primary education (3-6 years), %				
		18 (2018)	26 (2023)	30	60
	SDG indicator 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex				
	- Total	8,7 (2016)	N/A	15,4	29,5
	- Women	8,5 (2016)	N/A	15,2	30,2
	- Men	8,9 (2016)	N/A	15,6	29,8
	Adjusted SDG indicator 4.4.1: Individuals using the internet, %				
		70 (2018)	78.7 (2022)	80	95
	Adjusted SDG indicator 4.5.1: Gender Inequality Index				
		0.162 (2018)	0.149	0.145	0.089















INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	Adjusted SDG indicator 4.a.1: Primary and secondary education facilities equipped with computers and access to the internet for students; number of students per computer, average				
	- Average number of students per 1 computer (primary education)	14.42 (2018/2019)	11.06 (2021/2022)	8.00	4.00
	Average number of students per 1 internet access (primary education)	22.29 (2018/2019)	14.96 (2021/2022)	12.00	6.50
	- Average number of students per 1 computer (secondary education)	11.89 (2018/2019)	10.03 (2021/2022)	4.50	3.00
	- Average number of students per 1 internet access (secondary education)	14.67 (2018/2019)	11.64 (2021/2022)	7.00	4.00
					
	Alternative SDG indicator 5.1.1: Gender Development Index (GDI)	0.924 (2018)	0.940 (2021)	0.934	0.975
	Adjusted SDG indicator 5.4.1.a: Proportion of economically inactive persons aged 20-64 years who are inactive due to other family responsibilities (beside care for children and incapable adults or infirm persons)				
	- Total	26.3 (2019)	27.7 (2020)	20	17
	- Men	7.7 (2019)	9.1 (2020)	6	5
	- Women	36.3 (2019)	36.6 (2020)	30	20









INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
	Adjusted SDG indicator 5.4.1.b: Proportion of economically inactive persons aged 20-64 years who are inactive due to care for children or infirm adult persons					
		- Total	3.5 (2019)	6.2 (2021)	3	2
		- Men	0.4 (2019)	0.3 (2021)	0.4	0.4
		- Women	5.1 (2019)	8.9 (2021)	4	3
	Adjusted SDG indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in parliaments (%)					
		Bosnia and Herzegovina	21.4 (2018)	23.8	23.5	40.0
		Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	27.0 (2018)	26.5	29.0	40.0
		Republika Srpska	21.8 (2018)	26.5	24.0	40.0
		Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina	9.7 (2018)	12.9	20.0	40.0
 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION						
	SDG indicator 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services		75 (2019)	89 (2020)	80	90
	SDG indicator 6.3.1: Population connected to urban wastewater treatment, %		3.6 (2015)	21.7 (2017)	20	50
	Alternative SDG indicator 6.3.2.a: Biochemical consumption of oxygen in rivers		2.3 (2013)	N/A	2.1	1.94
	Alternative SDG indicator 6.3.2.b: Phosphates in rivers		0.03 (2014)	N/A	0.03	0.03




INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
	SDG indicator 6.5.1: Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100)	52.9 (2017)	60.88 (2020)	65	70	
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 						
	SDG indicator 7.1.2: Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology (urban)	62 (2015)	67 (2020)	69	84	
	SDG indicator 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)	35.7 (2018)	39.84 (2019)	41	45	
	SDG indicator 7.3.1: Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP	6.7 (2015)	6.1 (2019)	6.2	5.5	
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 						
	Adjusted SDG indicator 8.1.1: Real GDP growth rate	3.7 (2018)	7.4 (2021)	3.2	7	
	Alternative SDG indicator 8.2.2: Estimated GDP (2011. PPP \$), by sex					
		- Women	8,432 (2018)	10,709 (2021)	11,080	20,150
		- Men	17,123 (2018)	19,917 (2021)	21,100	28,500
	Adjusted SDG indicator 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural activities, by sex					
		- Total	17.1 (2019)	8,4 (2021)	15.0	12.0

















INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	↑ - Women	12.6 (2019)	6.9 (2021)	11.0	9.0
	↑ - Men	19.8 (2019)	9.6 (2021)	17.0	14.0
↓	Alternative SDG indicator 8.3.2.: New registered enterprises per 1,000 population (age group 15-64 years)	1.09 (2018)	1.00 (2020)	2.00	2.50
⊗	Adjusted SDG indicator 8.4.2.a: Domestic consumption of raw materials (kg/1USD of GDP)	2.0 (2015)	N/A	1.8	1.6
↓	Adjusted SDG indicator 8.4.b: Resource productivity ("PPS/kg")	0.8 (2015)	0.8 (2020)	1.8	1.6
↑	Alternative SDG indicator 8.5.2: Employment rate				
	↑ Total	35.5 (2019)	39.6 (2021)	37.3	45.9
	→ - Women	26.7 (2019)	28.7 (2021)	32.0	40.0
	↑ - Men	44.6 (2019)	51.1 (2021)	46.9	55.0
	↓ - Youth	23.4 (2019)	19,8 (2021)	24.6	30.2
↑	SDG indicator 8.6.1: Proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training (%)				
	↑ - Total	21.0 (2019)	19,9 (2021)	18.0	10.0
	↑ - Women	21.4 (2019)	20,4 (2021)	18.0	10.0
	↑ - Men	20.7 (2019)	19,5 (2021)	18.0	10.0






INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	SDG indicator 8.9.1: Sustainable tourism				
	- Tourism revenue as a proportion of GDP, % (8.9.1.a)	9.3 (2019)	6.6 (2021)	10.0	10.0
	- Annual tourism revenue growth rate (8.9.1.b)	6.9 (2019)	-29.1 (2021)	7.0	7.0
					
	Alternative SDG indicator 9.1.1: Infrastructure quality (1-5)	2.6 (2016)	2.4 (2018)	3.00	3.50
	SDG indicator 9.2.1: Manufacturing value added				
	- As a proportion of GDP (9.2.1.a)	11.7 (2015)	14.4 (2021)	13.0	15.0
	- Per capita * (9.2.1.b) \$	535 (2015)	667 (2021)	600	700
	SDG indicator 9.3.1: Proportion of small-scale industries in total industry value added (%)	17.06 (2017)	11.13 (2019)	21.40	22.80
	SDG indicator 9.4.1: Greenhouse gas emissions per USD 1 of GDP	0.59 (2014)	0.42 (2019)	0.53	0.47
	SDG indicator 9.5.1: Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP	0.20 (2015)	0.19 (2021)	0.53	2.00
	SDG indicator 9.5.2: Researchers (in full time equivalent) per million inhabitants	354 (2015)	460.2 (2021)	500	800
	SDG indicator 9.b.1: Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added	18% (2015)	19% (2019)	21%	25%

INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 					
	Alternative SDG indicator 10.1.1.a: Income Inequality Gini Coefficient	31.2	N/A	30	29
	Alternative SDG indicator 10.1.1.b: Account ownership at a financial institution				
	- Total	58.8 (2017)	N/A	65	80
	- Men	54.7 (2017)	N/A	63	80
	- Women	62.2 (2017)	N/A	67	80
	Alternative SDG indicator 10.4.1: Ratio of minimum net wages to average wages				
	- Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.44 (2019)	0.55 (2022)	0.47	0.51
	- Republika Srpska	0.50 (2019)	0.53 (2022)	0.51	0.54
	SDG indicator 10.c.1: Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	6.5 (2018)	6,9 (2021)	5,0	3,0
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 					
	Alternative SDG indicator 11.1.1: Housing conditions (%)				
	- Walls/foundation dampness	15.2 (2015)	10.0	N/A	8.0
	- Leaking roof	7.2 (2015)	5.0	N/A	3.0

INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	- Inadequate heating of a housing unit	10.8 (2015)	8.0	N/A	5.0
	- Rotted windows, window frames or doors	12.5 (2015)	10.0	N/A	6.0
	SDG indicator 11.4.1: Total expenditure per capita spent on the conservation, protection, and preservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)	46.38 (2019)	27.70 (2020)	48.00	55.00
	SDG indicator 11.5.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	To be established (2014)	N/A	To reduce by 20%	To reduce by 50%
	Alternative SDG indicator 11.6.1.a: Proportion of non-treated municipal waste	25 (2015)	23,5	17	10
	Alternative SDG indicator 11.6.1.b: Proportion of recycled municipal waste	0 (2015)	0,03 (2020)	15.00	30.00
	SDG indicator 11.6.2: Air pollution, average PM2.5 concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	34.6 (2019)	33,6 (2022)	21.0	13.0
	SDG indicator 11.b.2: Proportion of local governments with adopted inclusive and integrated development strategies that include disaster risk reduction	N/A	N/A	To increase by 50%	100%

INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 						
✘	Adjusted SDG indicator 12.4.2: Proportion of treated hazardous waste	7 (2018)	N/A	15	30	
✘	SDG indicator: 12.5.1: Recycling rate, tons of material recycled	4,000 t or 1% of produced waste (2018)	N/A	10%	35%	
➔	SDG indicator 12.6.1: Number of companies publishing sustainability reports	2 (2019)	11 (2022)	30	150	
13 CLIMATE ACTION 						
➔	SDG indicator 13.1.2: Proportion of local governments that adopted disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	NA	5%	50%	90%	
15 LIFE ON LAND 						
✘	Alternative SDG indicator 15.1.2.a: Preservation of biodiversity (%)					
	✘	- Clean water (15.1.2.a)	67 (2015)	N/A	90	100
	✘	- Land (15.1.2.b)	18 (2015)	N/A	35	50

INDICATOR		Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)
	Alternative SDG indicator 15.1.2.b: Percentage of protected areas (%)	2.07 (2013)	3,37 (2022)	7.0	17.0
	Alternative SDG indicator 15.1.2.b: Number of mine-suspected areas	478 (2019)	466 (2021)	350	300
					
	Adjusted SDG indicator 16.1.1: Premeditated murders per 100,000 population				
	 - Total	1.3 (2016)	1.31 (2020)	1.2	1.0
	 - Men	1.7 (2016)	2.3 (2020)	1.6	1.4
	 - Women	0.8 (2016)	0.3 (2020)	0.6	0.6
	Adjusted SDG indicator 16.6.1: Worldwide governance indicators				
	 - Voice and Accountability;	39.0 (2019)	36.2 (2021)	55.0	65.0
	 - Political Stability;	30.0 (2019)	33.4 (2021)	50.0	63.0
	 - Government Effectiveness	28.9 (2019)	13.4 (2021)	50.0	58.0
	 - Regulatory quality	47.0 (2019)	46.1 (2021)	55.0	70.0
	 - Rule of Law	47.6 (2019)	42.7 (2021)	48.0	53.0
	 - Control of Corruption	30.3 (2019)	28.8 (2021)	48.0	55.0
	SDG indicator 16.6.2: Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services	38.1 (2013)	N/A	50.0	70.0
	Alternative SDG indicator 16.6.3: Credit rating (S&P)	B (2018)	B stable (2022)	B+	BB

INDICATOR	Baseline value (2015)	Current/latest available value	Midterm target value (2023)	Final target value (2030)	
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 					
	Alternative SDG indicator 17.19.2: Strengthening statistical systems				
	<i>a) Methodological assessment of statistical capacities (0-100 scale)</i>	70.0 (2018)	70 (2020)	75	90
	<i>b) Assessment of periodicity and timeliness of statistical capacities (0-100 scale)</i>	66.7 (2018)	60 (2020)	70	80
	<i>c) Assessment of source data of statistical capacities (0-100 scale)</i>	70.0 (2018)	50 (2020)	75	90

