

Investment priorities in Environment and Climate change sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina

1.1. Description of needs and capacities in the sector

In order to reach better progress (economic, social and environmental) and provide brighter future, Bosnia and Herzegovina has to secure environment that will support and enhance sustainable development. One of the most important keys is efficient use of resources.

In the strategy Europe 2020, EU set up a goal to increase resource efficiency in order to bring major economic opportunities, improve productivity, drive down costs and boost competitiveness. All EU policies and actions are driven by "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth", so Bosnia and Herzegovina although not a member of EU, should follow the path of EU. Besides, in the Stabilization and Association Process, Bosnia and Herzegovina is obliged to meet some of EU requirements, such as adoption of specific laws, strategies, etc.

Further in this paper we will present a current situation in different sectors and list the investment priorities in every field.

Specific priority areas – current situation

Nature protection

The legislation on nature protection exists in both entities, as well as in Brcko district, but there are great discrepancies in legislation not just on entities' levels, but also on cantonal levels. It enables establishment of Agency or institution at BiH level, that would be in charge of collecting, registering and analyzing data on biological diversity and protected areas, and more importantly, planning of joint protection of biological diversity at the state level. Additional obstacle in nature protection sector is lack of institute for nature protection in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while in Republic of Srpska there is Institute for cultural, historical and natural heritage. Existing problems encountered in designation of protected areas or in protection of biological diversity at the state level represent an unfavourable basis for the launch of Natura 2000, although it is important for European integrations. The country took steps to identify an initial list of 122 potential NATURA 2000 ecological areas that account for approximately 20% of its territory. Regulations implementing the nature conservation acquis have been drafted in consultation with the responsible ministries of both entities.

The implementation of obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is also in its early stage.

In the year 2011 Emerald sites have been nominated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the moment there are 29 sites in total area of 250 455 ha.

Number of protected areas and the percentage of protected territory is small and does not reflect sufficient wealth in natural resources. To be more absurd, various infrastructure projects are being implemented or planned in present or future protected areas with minimum or no consideration for the protection of biodiversity. The most current example is plan for construction of small hydro power plants in National park Sutjeska.

Climate change

Climate changes are no longer a question, they are here and we have to learn how to adapt to them so their consequences have less negative impact on our lives and planet in general.

There is a comprehensive countrywide climate strategy in place in BiH, but some adaptations are needed in line with the expected EU 2030 policy framework on climate and energy. Also, it is important to integrate climate changes into sectorial policies and strategies.

BiH is one of the countries that ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. As a country that is not member of Annex 1 of the Convention, BiH has no restrictions in GHG emissions. Despite this, with the assistance of UNDP, BiH has developed the Initial and Second National Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Other positive thing is that BiH nominated a focal point for the Working Group on Climate Change and that regularly participates in work on climate under the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA).

Current BiH actions towards adaptation to climate changes are not sufficient; much more effort has to be invested. In order to implement the acquis, especially the EU model for trade emissions, and to join efforts of EU, we need to take practical steps to gradually assume the target value for greenhouse gas reduction (GSB). Country's monitoring, reporting and verification capacities have to be strengthened. Information and awareness on climate changes, its consequences and actions for possible reduction of climate changes have to be on much higher level.

Waste management

Although there is an improvement in legislation framework (Republic of Srpska adopted a new Waste management law; FBiH adopted implementing legislation on management of waste electrical and electronic equipment; both entities adopted implementing legislation on packaging and packaging waste) waste management in BiH is on very poor level. Implementation of existing legislations is not on satisfactory level and countrywide strategies for waste management and investments in this sector are missing.

Due to economic and tourism development and growing consumption trend, amount of municipal waste is increasing and we are facing a problem of disposing such amount of waste. Most of municipal waste, as well as hazardous, medical, animal, industrial waste, etc. are disposed at landfills

and dumping sites. Primary waste selection by type and origin does not exist and there is no separation of biodegradable waste. Landfills are mainly of an open type and located in areas that are not regulated by the principles of sanitary landfill. There are only a few sanitary landfills.

Waste hierarchy is only mentioned in laws, but is not implementing in practice. Recycling rate is under 5%. Reducing, reuse and recycling are not set as priorities, or where they are a priority, it is not implemented properly.

Correct data does not exist and are based on estimates that are either incomplete or unreliable. Reporting activities are mainly based on obligations from several international conventions and agreements.

Horizontal issues

Even though FBiH, RS and BD Laws on Environmental Protection indicate that each individual and organization have an opportunity to participate in decision making processes, public participation in environmental decision-making and public access to environmental information is very weak. The main reasons lie in the lack of transparency, information and awareness on citizens' rights and opportunities. In the last few years, there has been an improvement in implementation of Aarhus convention that BiH signed in 2008. In 2011, the First National Implementation Report on Aarhus Convention in BiH (NIR) was prepared jointly by ministries, agencies, NGOs, etc as well as second NIR in 2013. Three Aarhus centres are established in 2012/2013, but their work depends on funding of NGOs that establish and manage those centres.

By adopting the Laws on Environmental Protection in both entities, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is introduced and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directives is enhanced, but there is still a lot of need for improvement, especially when it comes to public consultation procedures. Also, Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context is not implemented yet, and this has to change as soon as possible.

One of the reasons for poor current status of environment in BiH is that there is no state Law on Environment and there is no signal that it will be adopted in the near future. One of the conditions to enhance the current status of environment is to have a good quality of data what is not the case at the moment. For most of the sectors (air, water, waste, climate changes, etc.) there is no database, especially on state level and the ones that exist are of a very poor quality with outdated and incomplete information.

1.2. Investment priorities and actions in order to improve current situation in each sector

Nature protection

1. Reform existing legislation framework in FBiH in order to synchronize nature protection on entity level. Current discrepancies in legislation at the cantonal and federal levels present one of the problems of nature protection on the FBiH territory.
2. Synchronization of Laws on entity levels. This will enable joint protection of biological diversity at the state level and creation of unique database on state level.
3. Establish biodiversity monitoring system - Data collection and monitoring of biodiversity trends are necessary for efficient management of natural biological resources, which requires a quick and adequate response.
4. Adaptation of legislation framework within other sectors in order to prevent nature destruction (example: construction of hydropower plants, opening of quarries, construction of roads, etc. in protected areas);
5. Review and assign new categories within protected areas - Many areas' categories assigned by old laws are still remaining
6. Develop a management plan for existing protected areas and proclaim new protected areas.

Climate change

1. Harmonization of countrywide climate policy and strategy in line with the expected EU 2030 policy framework on climate and energy.
2. Integration of strategy for adaptation to climate change into sectoral policies and strategies (agriculture sector, forestry, transportation, energy, etc.).
3. Set up a mitigation commitment. Mitigation commitments should be consistent with those of EU and its Member States.
4. Awareness-raising activities about climate changes and adaptation on climate changes on all levels.
5. Strengthen the country's monitoring, reporting and verification capacities.
6. Create a strategy or a plan for investment and technology transfers in the field of renewable energy, energy efficiency, agriculture, forestry, etc. Climate change represents a threat to local economies, but also provides an excellent opportunity to accelerate the transition towards sustainable economy
7. Improve data collection on climate changes. Many data are still missing, due to poor environmental data collecting and processing. For some climate change indicators in BiH data are missing partially or completely.

8. Enhance coordination between relevant institutions and agencies.

Waste management

1. Revise and set up deadlines for implementation of solid waste management plans prepared with EU support. Plan is not implemented according to planned dynamics, so it is urgently needed to revise it and set up deadlines for implementation of actions defined in the plan.
2. Develop missing strategies on entity levels (example: strategies for medical waste, electronic waste, etc.)
3. Define a target for amount of waste per capita desired to be reached until 2020 and create an action plan that shall enable that. Amount of produced waste is increasing every year, the waste hierarchy is almost not getting implemented, so it is urgent to define and start with implementation of activities that will change that.
4. Set up a recycling rate that has to be reached until 2020 and create an action plan that will enable that.
5. Create an investment plan, find potential investors and promote investments in recycling technology and projects. Recycling facilities that exist at the moment are not sufficient. There is a need for new facilities and this is also a big opportunity for making profit.
6. Create a strategic plan for investments in sanitary landfills.
7. Enlarge capacities for managing industrial and hazardous waste.
8. Promote waste hierarchy between citizens, private companies and institutions.