

**National report on  
Monitoring progress and promotion of water demand management policies**

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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**Overview and conclusion**

As it is already stressed, Bosnia and Herzegovina has at its disposal significant water resources, which could be one of the most important factors of general economic development for the majority of areas in the forthcoming period. The fresh water basins are a key natural resource in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, lack of rational usage and care for good water quality has led to discrepancy between water availability and water demands.

From this report it can be seen that water management was not one of the priority issues for B&H. The general opinion of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that water is a resource present in large amounts in this region, and that saving of this resource is not necessary. This can also be confirmed by water consumption in different sectors (households, industry and agriculture) in the past period. All these sectors had large water losses that were not rehabilitated in most of the cases, but additional amounts of water were provided from new water sources.

In the after-war period, the legal and institutional framework of the water sector was based on the socialist administrative culture characterised by a high level of centralisation, non-transparent financing, with the stress on planning, and limited public participation in the water sector management processes. The same period was also characterised by lack of coordinated and harmonised action of relevant institutions that would aim for overcoming of the consequences of war and meeting of the increasing needs for water, which resulted in the disorganised system in the field of water management. In addition, the differences in water management entity structures have to a large degree limited the adequate water management. For that reason, it was necessary to define the new platform for integrated water management and use. As the result of these activities, the new Water Law has been prepared and adopted, which is based on the basic guidelines of EU legislation, and above all in accordance with WFD. Each of the entities adopted its law, but the laws are largely harmonised. This law has foreseen the water management at the level of river basins, and development of the water management plans. In order to ensure the implementation strategy, the development of the river basin management plans has also been foreseen. These plans should be the basis for the future management of the needs of different users (households, industry, agriculture). For that reason it is necessary for all of them to be involved in development of these plans and to realise their rights through them. For that purpose, it is necessary to implement continuous education of all stakeholders in this region.

In addition, it is necessary to pay closer attention to protection of water resources in the following period. Almost all wastewater in the Mediterranean basin is directly discharged into environment, without any previous treatment. For that reason it is necessary to build sewerage networks and wastewater treatment plants in all municipal areas where they do not exist, but also to repair the existing ones that are in most cases out of function.

As it can be seen from the strategies elaborated in the previous sections, the possibilities for development of agricultural production in the Mediterranean region of B&H are significant. Considering that Bosnia and Herzegovina is importing large amounts of food and at the same time has the possibilities for development of agricultural production that have not been utilised, it can be expected that the situation will change in the near future. If the agricultural production is further developed, it can then be expected that larger land areas will be irrigated in order to achieve better yield as well as better managed water needs. Industrial consumption is also negligible in relation to the pre-war situation, mainly due to the fact that some

industries are no longer operating. However, similarly to agriculture, it can be expected that industrial production will be reinitiated, which will increase the water needs.

Generally, economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina will in future exert a lot of pressure on water resources. On the one hand this will be reflected in the increased water needs (production processes and irrigation) and on the other in the increased pollution loads. In order to reduce this pressure to the lowest possible extent, it will be necessary to apply different measures (technical, financial, institutional) and new legislation in the sector.

In order to implement all the above-mentioned measures, large financial resources will be necessary in a short period of time. It would be an illusion to expect that the state itself and individuals can provide these resources. Therefore, the assistance of international institutions will be necessary for provision of these resources.

All of this represents a large temptation for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the near future, but we can hope that the need to preserve these valuable resources will be recognised, and that water will be utilised in the best possible way.