



United Nations (UN)

Policy approach

The UN policy approach to BiH has been defined through the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) endorsed by the BiH Council of Ministers in December 2020 and formally signed in May 2021. In line with the provisions stipulated in the UNSDCF, the overall UNSDCF implementation approach is inclusive and coherent ensuring a country-wide ownership and leadership on the priorities for the UN and BiH partnership through joint consultations and engagement of all levels of government in BiH as well as international partners and non-governmental stakeholders.

The authorities in BiH and the UN system have mutual accountability for the achievement of planned UNSDCF results. Based on their comparative advantages, UN system agencies contribute policy advice, in accordance with international norms, standards and best practices, and help to develop new capacities at all levels of government in BiH for the implementation and monitoring of strategies, policies and plans in BiH. Emphasis is placed on those strategies, policies and plans that align strongly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and targets as set forth in the SDGs Framework in BiH endorsed by the authorities in BiH in April 2021.

Other development actors are critical for the success of UNSDCF. Given its comprehensive focus on vulnerable groups across all UNDCF priorities and efforts to ensure that these groups are not left behind, broader cooperation and partnership is applied including civil society groups, NGOs, community groups, the human rights institutions, academia, media, the private sector, and international partners. This is expected to leverage greater capacities and resources, including financing, toward achievement of the UNSDCF results and SDGs targets in BiH.

Mindful of the comprehensive ambition and inter-sectoral nature of the UNSDCF results and the SDGs targets in BiH, including the financial needs, stronger and expanded partnerships are forged beyond the authorities in BiH. This includes close collaboration with the civil society, private sector, academia, community groups, and international partners, the IFIs and the EU in particular, in order to leverage broader capacity and resource baseline for the achievement of the SDGs targets in BiH. This is achieved through a stronger convening role of the UN system bringing together all the relevant stakeholders in a coordinated and strategic manner on key SDGs-related policy discussions.

Financing strategies and approaches will be developed to address (1) Funding gaps for UNSDCF outcomes and (2) Achievement of the SDG Framework in BiH and domesticated SDG targets. For the SDG framework this will involve costing of the framework and mapping and alignment of sector budgets against the SDG pathways and drivers. All funding and financing strategies promote cost-sharing and stronger partnerships with the private sector, including individual donors and corporate partners. New sources of finance are being identified, including options for blended finance and influencing the policy environment to facilitate greater resource flows for SDG-related country priorities.

- **Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Growth**

(Corresponding to the following IPA II sectors: Environment and Climate change, Competitiveness and Innovation, Agriculture and Rural Development and Energy)

Activities under this UNSDCF Focus Area promote implementation of strategies and policies for economic growth that is more inclusive, sustainable and geared toward maximizing resources for social protection and investments in quality health, education and other public services. The UN activities are supporting a stronger policy and regulatory environment and stimulus measures to enable low-carbon development, spur business development and increased competitiveness, and support the creation of green and decent jobs, complemented by environmental action. Tangible activities include stronger climate change mitigation policies, the introduction of low carbon technology and digital economy strategies and plans, more small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in main economy sectors applying sustainable business models, stronger active labor market measures (ALMPs) to connect young people, especially young women and vulnerable groups, with good jobs in the formal economy, and stronger incentives for investments in innovation and research and development (R&D). These are backstopped with coordinated implementation of natural and cultural resource management policies and plans, in line with the EU and international standards.

Quality, Accessible and Inclusive Education, Health and Social Protection

(Corresponding to the following IPA II sectors: Education, Employment and Social Policies)

The UN activities under this focus area support two critical and complementary objectives, central to a more inclusive and fair society: 1) The first concerns more inclusive and higher quality education, focused on 21st century skills and employability of people, especially the young and vulnerable. Activities support conditions for more inclusive and higher quality education that offer all children and young people the 21st century skills they will need for employment success in a modern, EU-oriented labor market. The second set of activities are geared towards improving the quality and affordability of health services and social protection for all people in BiH, and especially vulnerable groups. Cooperation aims to strengthen the institutional conditions for more efficient, fair, and inclusive health and social protection systems, including multi-sectoral referrals to prevent and offer protection from gender-based violence and violence, abuse and exploitation of children. An equity focus, with improved spending analysis and targeting, will be supported to ensure that health and social protection programmes and services are responding effectively to the situation of vulnerable groups.

- **People-centered Governance and Rule of Law**

(Corresponding to the following IPA II sectors: Democracy and Governance and Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights.)

The activities support practical governance reforms, in line with the priorities in BiH, that should enable the authorities in BiH to partner more effectively with people in order to shape and deliver transparent, fair, and more responsive policies, laws and public services and this includes the response to the current mixed movement of asylum-seekers and migrants in the country. For example: cantons and local governments are supported to develop SDG-aligned development plans and monitoring systems, acquire new capabilities and mechanisms to strengthen people consultation and participation in policymaking, and shift towards e-governance to modernize public performance and make public services more effective

and accessible. Stronger focus is placed on the accountability and integrity of the public service, with focus on public utilities. Efforts are also focused on increasing women's participation in political and economic decision-making. UN system agencies continue to support the authorities in BiH to collect SDG-related data and use it to strengthen the evidence base for governance related policies and plans that are aligned with the long-term sustainable goals as set forth in the SDGs Framework in BiH as well as to tap into financing from private sector for SDGs implementation.

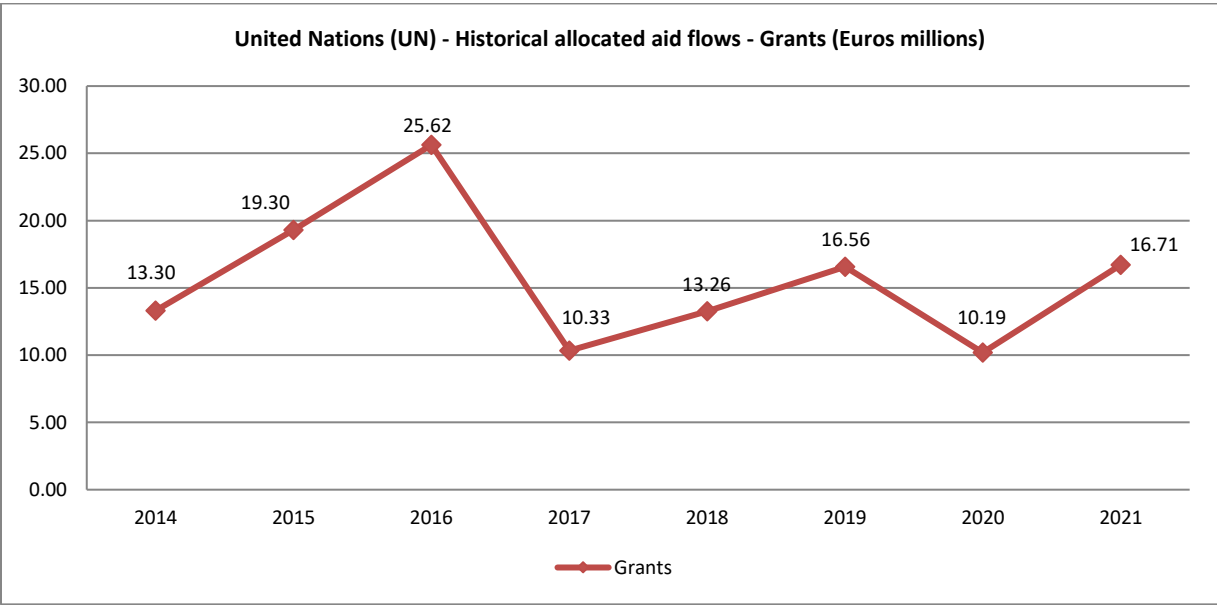
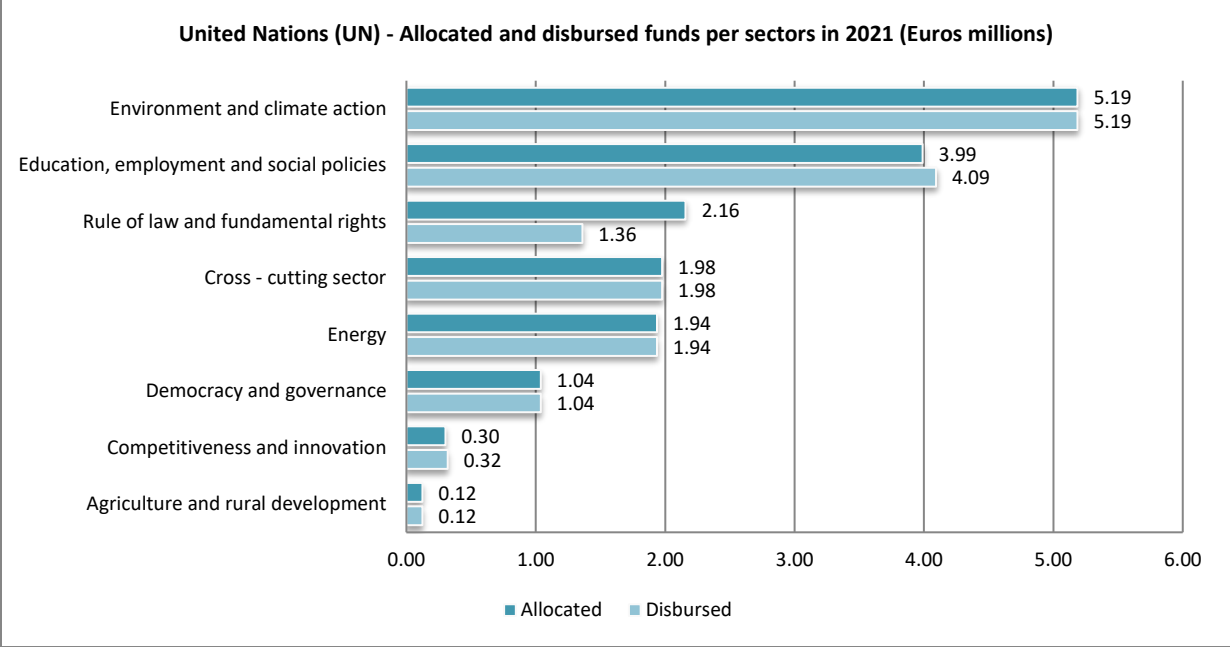
- **Social Cohesion**

(Corresponding to the following IPA II sectors: Democracy and Governance, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights, and Regional and Territorial Cooperation)

The UN system will implement activities to enable dialogue and meaningful engagement of people in BiH, young people in particular, across their socio-political or ethnic groups. At the same time, cooperation also targets non-traditional actors, such as the religious communities, along with the media and academia, to create local enabling environments for direct people engagement, volunteerism and dialogue. Activities are expected to provide access to new public and online spaces and opportunities to engage in constructive actions and discussion about their communities and local authorities will have new skills and mechanisms to engage with and respond to their constituencies. Amongst others this is expected to promote critical thinking and zero tolerance for all forms of violence.

Key activities in 2021

United Nations (UN) **allocated € 16.71 million and disbursed € 16.04 million in 2021 in the form of grant** to the following sectors: Environment and climate action, Education, employment and social policies, Rule of law and fundamental rights, Cross - cutting sector, Energy, Democracy and governance, Competitiveness and innovation and Agriculture and rural development. In this regard, it is important to note that **United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented total amount of €116.45 million in 2021.**



Medium and long term approach

The UN in BiH will continue to focus on implementation of the 2021–2025 UNSDCF for BiH endorsed by the BiH Council of Ministers in December 2020 and delivering on its commitments together with domestic and international partners. In line with these commitments, the primary initiatives will be implemented within the four strategic UNSDCF Focus Areas in cooperation with the authorities in BiH, international partners and non-governmental stakeholders:

- **Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Growth**

Cooperation will promote the implementation of strategies and policies for economic growth that is more inclusive, sustainable and resilient, especially in the context of the negative socio-economic impacts caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The UN system will support a stronger policy and regulatory environment and stimulus measures to enable low-carbon development, spur business development and increased competitiveness, and support the creation of green and decent jobs, complemented by environmental action.

- **Quality, Accessible and Inclusive Education, Health and Social Protection**

The cooperation outcome is to create conditions for more inclusive and higher quality education that offers 21st century skills to all children and young people. It will also aim to create conditions for more efficient, fair, and inclusive health care and social protection and social welfare systems and services. Efforts to analyze and find efficiencies in spending and services and equity for vulnerable groups will be a major focus of the upcoming activities.

- **People-centered Governance and Rule of Law**

Cooperation with the authorities in BiH will also be geared towards creating more accountable and transparent governance systems that should enable a more effective partnership with people in BiH and shape and deliver more responsive policies, laws and public services, including in response to natural hazards and emergency situations, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic and the refugees and migrant situation in the country. Efforts will also focus on leveraging technology to modernize public performance and support digital governance and increasing women's participation in political and economic decision-making.

- **Social Cohesion**

Initiatives will be implemented geared towards increasing levels of mutual respect, trust and empathy between people and communities across all BiH and addressing the reconciliation deficit and contributing to greater social cohesion and stability.

Development partners coordination efforts

In the capacity of the Co-Chair of the SDGs Council in BiH, the UN has continued with its technical and strategic support of the SDGs implementation in BiH. To that end and following the formal endorsement of the SDGs Framework in BiH in April 2021, the SDGs Council organized a series of coordination meeting with development partners to sensitize the importance and value of the SDGs Framework in BiH, galvanize their support for its implementation and strengthen the alignment approach of development partners with the SDGs priorities in the Country.

In 2021, the UN also continued with the practice of organizing coordination meeting with the relevant representatives of the BiH authorities and donor community on the aspects related to the COVID-19 response and recovery. Several meetings were organized during the reporting period in partnership with the representatives of the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs and the BiH Ministry of Security providing

assessments on the epidemiological and vaccination trends in the country as well as the opportunities to discuss the ongoing needs and priorities to be addressed by the international partners in BiH.

In terms of the sector-related coordination mechanisms, the following participation can be reported by the UN:

- **Democracy and Governance**

- International Working Group on Gender Equality (IWGE) co-chaired by BiH Agency for Gender Equality and UN provides a vehicle for practically engaging all the international community and is central in UN's efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming across span of international partners. Thematic quarterly meetings allow for space to discuss efforts on tackling violence, joint normative priorities as well as to incorporate GE perspective in the programming of international partners.
- Coordination of statistical activities is done solely at the level of the Board of Directors of all three statistical institutions and depending on ongoing initiatives. Other partners, including the United Nations, are involved in these coordination meetings as needed such as the representatives of entity Public Health Institutes when it comes to health statistical data.
- Local Governance and Local Development Coordination Group.

- **Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights**

- Mixed migration working group (MMWG): participating agencies: UN, DRC, MDM, Save the Children.
- Protection Sector working group (PSWG): The PSWG meets on monthly basis, with *ad hoc* meetings if any urgent issue to be discussed. Participating agencies: UN, Save the Children, BHWI, Vasa Prava, DRC, MDM.
- Justice for Children coordination mechanism.
- Small Arms and Light Weapons Coordination Board.
- Strategic and Coordination Committee Ministry of Defense BiH Ammunition, Weapons and Explosives Master Plan.
- Mine Action BiH Board of Donors.

- **Energy**

- Energy International Community Coordination Meeting led by UN

- **Competitiveness and Innovation**

- Inter-institutional Working Group/Programme Working Group for the design of support measures.
- Operational Working Group for evaluation of applications.

- **Education, Employment and Social Policies**

- Education coordination mechanism led by OSCE.
- Conference of the Ministers of Education led by the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs.
- Social service workforce steering committee meetings.
- Social and child protection sector quarterly coordination meetings of FBiH Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and 10 Cantonal Ministries of Social Policies, including with key NGOs and UN.

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