

**Economic Commission for Europe**  
Expert Meeting and Workshop on Statistics for SDGs,  
**Webinar “National SDG indicators and VNR”**  
27 April 2020, 15.00-17.00, EST time

**Working paper: National indicators and voluntary report – Bosnia and Herzegovina experience**

Before any discussion on national indicators, national planning, and national reporting, a few things need to be pointed out.

First, Bosnia and Herzegovina never had countrywide development strategies. More than a decade one Development Strategy was prepared but politically it never got adopted.

Second, competencies among different levels of government clearly state different sectoral policies (ie. Health sector, education, employment, security, foreign policy, statistics, etc.), but some areas are not defined. One of those is the coordination, country-wide policy planning, countrywide policy reporting. Also, this activity is not defined by any law, except in one administrative level of the country, entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a newly adopted law that relates to Federal government, cantons, and municipalities. However, there is no legislation on cooperation between all administrative levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this setup, we started to do activities related to the adaptation, and localization of Agenda 2030.

Since Agenda 2030 has a new UN approach we had to do several promotion conferences among our peers and to educate ourselves on what does it mean to translate UN Agenda into our context and how to do it.

Almost two years after the Agenda 2030 was globally adopted, on 22 March 2017, Council of Ministries B&H assigned Directorate for Economic Planning (DEP) as a technical body for delivering the road map and action plan.

This was a logical selection since DEP has the experience in coordination processes of preparing strategies: development strategies, social inclusion strategy. Currently, we are coordinating Smart specialization strategy (countrywide), Mid-term program of Council of Ministries (institutions of BiH level) and Economic Reform Program

(countrywide). Aside from these assignments we prepare reports on development, social inclusion, economic trends and we forecast GDP. So even though we are a small institution in total around 20 people are employed, we are very involved in the coordination processes and adequate use of indicators.

After, conducting a couple of promotion activities the UN in BiH launched the project in November 2017 that was financed by Sweden's development agency. Since that time, most of the activities that were done were supported by the Project.

The final output of the project was to produce Voluntary national reports, SDG Framework and establishing a mechanism for monitoring and reporting the implementation of the SDG Framework.

Several working groups were formed within the project:

1. The main working group: working group for the planning of implementation of the SDG in BiH. Members of this working group are coordinated bodies of all levels of government (except cantons and municipalities) and statistic institutes.
2. Working group for delivering VNR for BiH (Ministry for foreign affairs Bosnia and Herzegovina, Directorate for Economic Planning, coordinating institutions in tow entities and Brčko District)
3. Working group for delivering SDG Framework in BiH (Ministry for foreign affairs Bosnia and Herzegovina, Directorate for Economic Planning, coordinating institutions in tow entities and Brčko District)
4. Working group for data (Directorate for Economic Planning, statistical institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and UN custodian agencies)

One of the first activities that were undertaken was building the SDG indicator Dashboard. We mapped all SDG indicators in one excel sheet to establish the availability of data, the periodicity of data, level of disaggregation, reporting agency etc. We always gave the primal to the Official statistics in selecting the indicator. Afterward, we were filtering by the periodicity, reliability and what time does it take to produce the indicator. The Dashboard also resulted in pointing out the importance of many surveys that are unfortunately due to politics, their implementation is

questionable. So for instance, we are not measuring poverty based on income. Household budget survey (HBS) even though contains data on the income it has missing data. We are in continuous communication with the Agency for Statistics BiH, checking is it possible to extract data from HBS that relates to the income side (social protection data, remittances). We are not expecting a high level of significance and not any disaggregation.

On the other side, many SDG indicators that are useful for monitoring in our country are obtained from the MICS survey (preschool participation, health status, nutrition status...).

Unfortunately, MICS is not implementing as planned, and it is being constantly delayed. Currently, the main source for social indicators is extracted from the survey is LFS.

We started to write the VNR at the beginning of 2019 and finished it in May 2019. First of all, it is important to say that we didn't have statistical Annex. Within the working group, we came to agreement not to have the Statistical Annex. This was primarily due to a fact that we didn't have the SDG Framework developed, nor development strategy, so we realized that it would be better to include that in the next VNR. We were also reviewing a dozen of previous VNRs, and we noticed the pattern that the country didn't have Statistical Annex if the national strategy was not set-up. Concerning the rest of the VNR content, we were flexible and innovative. Since we didn't have a strategic framework, we decided to focus on the process that was done. Mostly we want to inform the broad VNR public what efforts were conducted for promoting the Agenda 2030 to everyone (schools, faculties, institutions, NGOs, etc) and the coordination among different stakeholders in building the SDG Framework. We also devote one section to the indicators, and each goal was presented in two pages. We focused as much as we could on SDG indicators. The interconnection between VNR sub-group and SDG data subgroup was not fully implemented. The reason for this is that the VNR deadlines were very swift, and the data working group was formed when we were in the middle of the process. Nevertheless, the SDG indicators that we used were published in the latest statistical report Indicators for sustainable development (Agency for Statistics BiH).

The VNR working group decided to present the indicators in the most objective way because we could compare BiH with developed countries, where most of our indicators

are underachieved, or vice versa. Instead, we put the indicators as they are, in a specific time trend, leaving to readers to conclude how well are we performing related the specific indicators. This was because we were in a phase of producing the situation analysis for SDG Framework and we didn't want to mix those two processes.

Each goal, aside from containing statistical indicators, it contains the section best practices.

We managed to complete the VNR respecting the all given deadlines, event thought two out of four governments were in the technical mandate. Because the adoption had to be secured on all the levels prior the uploading it.

Now, when we are actively working on SDG Framework the confection with the data group is much tighter. We are working in a small informal group, UN coordinator for SDG, DEP and National focal point for SDG indicators.

After completed mapping (SDG Framework), we took a step back, and we overviewed the actual questionnaire for LFS and HBS attempting to capture as many indicators as possible and to find the best matching proxy indicator. The focus on those two surveys is since those surveys will be continuously conducted, LFS quarterly.

We are also in the phase of drafting the monitoring and reporting plan. The section is currently in the drafting phase and comparing it with all other activities it is the most difficult part to do. We are defining a monitoring plan for the multilevel, multisector document, which was never been defined before. Accordingly, the institutions are also lacking knowledge in building an adequate monitoring framework. However, I am sure that we will also complete this activity successfully.

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