

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
11th Conference of the Parties in Namibia, Windhoek,
16 – 27 September 2013



SIDE EVENT

NAP Development in South Eastern Europe

A Sub-regional approach to combat Land Degradation:
THE BALKANS NAP ALIGNMENT PROCESS

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

Country Profiles and Main Degradation Issues:
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, FYR and Montenegro

17 September 2013, Windhoek, Namibia



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United Nations Environmental Programme – UNEP
Global Environment Facility - GEF
Forestry and Environmental Action - fea

About the Side Event

The four countries of the Balkan region, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, are pioneering the UNCCD NAP alignment processes in Central and East Europe. With support of GEF and UNEP, the countries have started with the NAP alignment in 2013 almost simultaneously, and have identified numerous opportunities for synergies, complementariness and experience sharing and increased role of the civil society sector. The cooperation and synergies overarches to other ongoing GEF and UNEP supported projects in the region, such as the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans of the CBD convention.

The Side Event "**NAP Development in South Eastern Europe**" aims at presenting the NAP alignment process in the four Balkan countries by their national representatives and with support of the NGO sector, as an example of organically growing regional response to land degradation also through NAP alignment, which can be replicated in other countries and regions.

This Background Document is designed to be an introduction to the Side Event program by providing basic geographic and economic information, as well as key land degradation issues in the four countries.

The Side Event is promoted by Bosnia and Herzegovina, the RS Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, with the support and participation of Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro.

The event is supported by UNEP Vienna ISCC and Forestry and Environmental Action (fea).

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Basic Geographic Information

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is located on the Balkan Peninsula, bordering with Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. The surface of BiH amounts to 51,209.2 km². In the south BiH has access to the Adriatic Sea.

BiH consists of three administrative units: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), Republika Srpska (RS) and Brcko District (BD). The official languages are Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has three climate types: a moderate continental climate predominating in the north, a mountainous climate in the central part of the country, and a Mediterranean climate in the south.

BiH is a primarily mountainous country covered in forests. The average altitude is 500 meters, with the highest peak being the Maglic Mountain (2,387 m). Out of the total land area, 42% consists of mountains, 24% of hills, 29% of karst areas and 5% of lowlands. BiH owns a high value in water resources in the Balkan Peninsula, as there are many surface and ground water flows. Bosnia and Herzegovina has seven main river valleys: the Una, the Vrbas, the Drina, the Bosna, the Sava, the Neretva, the Trebisnjica and the Cetina rivers. BiH is also abundant in thermal, mineral and thermo-mineral sources.

The country has 3 national parks: Kozara, Sutjeska and Una. Biodiversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered to be high, and is especially important in terms of global biodiversity due to its high level of endemism and relicts.



Capital: Sarajevo (and the largest city)

Population: 3,839,737 (2011 estimate)

Member of: UN, IMF, World Health Organization, EFTA (since 2013), Central European Initiative, OSCE, WTO

World Development Indicators for BiH

| Indicator | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) | 8,650.00 | 9,060.00 | 9,380.00 |
| Population, total | 3,845,929.00 | 3,839,322.00 | 3,833,916.00 |
| GDP (current US\$) | 16,775,469,777.65 | 18,242,471,097.48 | 17,047,582,420.00 |
| GDP growth (annual %) | 0.70 | 1.30 | (0.70) |
| Life expectancy at birth, total (years) | 75.40 | 75.55 | |

Source: World Data Bank, September 2013

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Key Land Degradation Issues

BiH is a country with economy in transition, and is still dealing with the effects of the war, 1991-1995, with numerous social, economic and environmental issues. Land degradation stands out as a very important issue for sustainable development, as well as for dealing with climate change, which affects mostly the karst region (constitutes one third of BiH). Land use in BiH lacks adequate planning. Loss of agricultural land and alluvial soil in river valleys in most cases is a result of poorly planned building of residential and industrial facilities and infrastructure, irrational exploitation of mineral raw materials and excessive erosion caused by deforestation and irregular implementations of erosion control measures. This loss amounts to more than 5,000 ha per year in the whole country.

The main issues related to land degradation are:

- Destruction of soil caused by exploitation of raw materials,
- Occurrence of “wild” landfills,
- Poor spatial placement of residential, industrial and other facilities,
- Increase in soil acidity,
- Erosion and landslides due to deforestation.

6,000 ha of land were directly destroyed as a result of the war. 15,000 – 20,000 minefields were placed during the war, with over 1 million mines and other explosive devices, over an area of 420,000 ha (8 % of the total land area of the country). Minefields still remain a serious threat and a long-term threat in the entire country. During the war, almost 2.5 million people migrated, especially in rural areas, which lead to negative environmental impacts and effects on land.

Participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Convention

BiH ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on 26 August 2002. Since then, several important efforts were made in the country towards the implementation of the Convention.

BiH submitted its First National Report to UNCCD in 2007, which was the result of joint efforts of 7 national institutions. Consequently, the Forth National Report has been prepared and submitted, while the preparations necessary to set up institutional background for the Fifth National Report is underway. The country still lacks a National Action Program (NAP) under the UNCCD, but this is currently under preparation.

The country lacks (i) systematic soil monitoring, (ii) soil/land informational system, (iii) information on soil/land contamination to ensure healthy food production, (iv) adequate system of land assessment (land classification), (v) unified land inventory, (vi) implementation of rehabilitation and remedial measures, (vii) low level of awareness regarding the significance of soil and land for sustainable development and survival of the population, low level of land use planning, lack of land maps that would serve for better physical and land use planning.

Present issues relevant for land management in BiH, along with factors contributing to land degradation and corresponding goals and measures in this area are given in the National Environmental Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina (NEAP). For the land management, primary goals defined in NEAP are institutional strengthening for improved management, protection and use of land resources and reduction of land degradation. According to the NEAP, one of the first measures for achieving these goals is the development of NAP to combat land degradation.

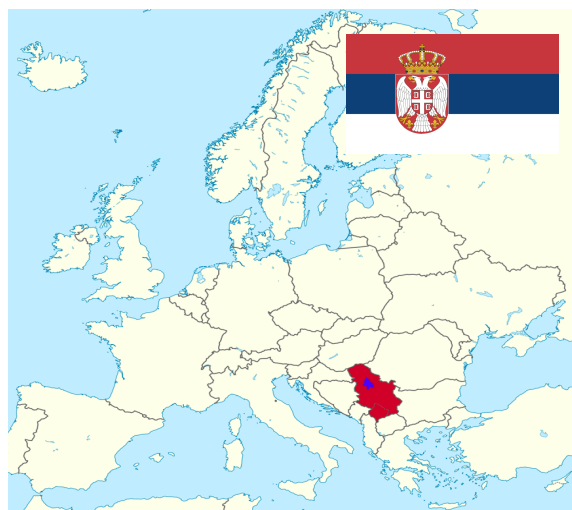
SERBIA

Basic Geographic Information

Serbia is located in the Balkan Peninsula and the Pannonia Plain. The country has several notable topographical features: the Pannonia Plain (mainly Vojvodina) and river lowlands, the Balkan and Carpathian Mountains, the Dinaric Alps, along with hills stretching across the central part of Serbia. Serbia is a landlocked country located at the crossroads of Central and Southeast Europe. Its total area is 88,361 km².

The climate of Serbia is under the influences of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea and the landmass of Eurasia. Continental climate in the north, with cold winters, and hot, humid summers with well distributed rainfall patterns, and a more Adriatic climate in the south with hot, dry summers and autumns and rank daily average relatively cold winters with heavy inland snowfall.

Danube River is the largest source of fresh water. Other main rivers are Sava, Morava, Tisa, Drina and Ibar. Over 31% of Serbia is covered by forest. National parks take up to 10% of the country's territory. Serbia has 5 national parks (Derdap, Kopaonik, Tara, Šar Planina, Fruska Gora and Prokletije) and 22 nature reserves.



Capital: Belgrade (and the largest city)

Population: 7,186,862 (2011 estimate)

Member of: UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, PfP, BSEC, and CEFTA, an official candidate for membership in the EU

World Development Indicators for Serbia

| Indicator | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) | 10,760.00 | 10,960.00 | 11,180.00 |
| Population, total | 7,291,436.00 | 7,258,745.00 | 7,223,887.00 |
| GDP (current US\$) | 36,990,001,283.53 | 43,291,846,195.80 | 37,488,935,009.79 |
| GDP growth (annual %) | 1.01 | 1.63 | (1.70) |
| Life expectancy at birth, total (years) | 73.94 | 74.59 | |

Source: World Data Bank, September 2013

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Agricultural areas dominate in Serbia, spreading over 58% of the country (Corina Land Cover database, 2006). About 26% is occupied by arable land, 16% by complex cultivation and 13% by principally agricultural land with areas of natural vegetation. Semi-natural and forest areas cover almost 40% of the country (broad-leaved forest account for 27%). Land classified as artificial areas occupies nearly 3% and the rest of national territory, about 1.6% was classified as wetlands or water.

The major natural hazards in Serbia are floods, torrential floods, storms, heavy rain, atmospheric discharge, hail, drought, landslide or landslip, snow deposits and avalanche.

The main processes connected with land degradation in Serbia are as follows:

- Change of land use (land degradation due to industrial, mining, and power-producing activities)
- Loss of soil organic matter,
- Acidification and salinization of soils,
- Different forms of contaminations as a result of the excessive use of agrochemicals, heavy metals, and industrial pollution,
- Wind and water erosion,
- Compaction and other types of physical degradation of agricultural soil.

Participation of Serbia in the Convention

Serbia has endorsed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification / Land Degradation (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2007.

Since UNCCD indicators in Serbia are not implemented yet and no existing legal obligations of indicators monitoring appropriate data from national institutions (for example from: Hydro meteorological Service Republic of Serbia, Statistical Service Republic of Serbia, Environmental Agency of Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture of Republic of Serbia, etc.). The Serbian National Strategy and Action Plan on Drought Preparedness, Management, and Mitigation in the Agricultural Sector was developed with support and assistance from the Ministry of Energy development and environment protection, Republic Hydro-meteorological Service (RHMS), Ministry of Forest and Agriculture, Environmental Agency, Faculty of Forestry.

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THE FYR MACEDONIA

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) is a country located in the central Balkan Peninsula. A landlocked country, the FYR Macedonia borders Kosovo, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania. Its total area is 25,713 km².

The FYR Macedonia is geographically defined by a central valley formed by the Vardar River and framed by mountain ranges. Three large lakes, Lake Ohrid, Lake Prespa and Dojran Lake lie on the southern borders. Ohrid is considered to be one of the oldest lakes and biotopes in the world.

The FYR Macedonia has a transitional climate from Mediterranean to continental. The summers are hot and dry and the winters are moderately cold. There are three main climatic zones in the country, temperate Mediterranean, mountainous and mildly Continental.

The country has 3 national parks: Mavrovo, Galicica, Pelister. The flora is represented with around 210 families, 920 genera, and around 3,700 plant species. National Park of Pelister in Bitola is known for the presence of the endemic Macedonian Pine, as well as some 88 species of plants representing almost 30 percent of Macedonian tree species.



Capital: Skopje (and the largest city)

Population: 2,022,547 (from 2002 census)

Member of: UN, IMF (since 1992), World Health Organization (since 1993), EBRD (since 1993), Central European Initiative (since 1993), Council of Europe (since 1995), OSCE (since 1995), SECI (since 1996), WTO (since 2003), Central European Free Trade Agreement (since 2006), La Francophonie (since 2001), EU candidate state (since 2005)

World Development Indicators for Macedonia, FYR

| Indicator | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) | 10,960.00 | 11,150.00 | 11,570.00 |
| Population, total | 2,102,216.00 | 2,103,890.00 | 2,105,575.00 |
| GDP (current US\$) | 9,338,665,630.76 | 10,439,099,881.13 | 9,663,203,711.46 |
| GDP growth (annual %) | 2.89 | 2.84 | (0.27) |
| Life expectancy at birth, total (years) | 74.62 | 74.79 | |

Source: World Data Bank, September 2013

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Key Land Degradation Issues

Being a country in transition, the FYR Macedonia is faced with numerous social, economic and environmental problems, among which the issue of land degradation stands out as one of the most crucial.

Agricultural land covers about 37% of the country. Some of it is located on a rough relief, while a significant portion of it is shallow eroded land of low fertility. Arable land is around 17% of the agricultural land. Land cover changes during the period of 1990-2006 (Corine Land Cover, 2006) contribute to an increase of artificial surfaces, decrease of agricultural surfaces, decrease of forest and semi-natural areas, and an increase in wetlands. Loss of agricultural land is caused by land abandonment, low level or absence of support and subsidies for agriculture, but also emergence of artificial surfaces resulting from construction of residential and industrial facilities, exploitation of minerals, forest fires, landfills, etc.

Drought is also a common phenomenon in the FYR Macedonia, which causes many problems in agriculture, forestry, and water management. One of the contributing factors to increased fires is climate change. For instance, heat waves and the highest temperatures ever recorded along with the prolonged dry period pushed the usual summer forest-fire season drastically beyond its usual pattern. Forest fires not only damage biodiversity, but also significantly increase risk of soil erosion and landslides.

Participation of the FYR Macedonia in the Convention

The FYR Macedonia ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2002. Since then, several important efforts were made in the country towards the implementation of the Convention.

The FYR Macedonia has submitted Reports to UNCCD in 2006, 2010 and 2012. Nevertheless, the collection of data for reporting purposes lacks homogeneity and collaboration among relevant institutions needs to be strengthened by introducing a framework system of data collection and sharing.

The development of NAP to combat land degradation and its integration into relevant national strategies and documents in FYRM was highlighted in the First National Report on the implementation of the UNCCD, as one of the urgent measures in addressing the problem of land degradation. Currently, the FYR Macedonia has an approved GEF project to prepare the NAP aligned with the UNCCD.

Based on existing analyses of land degradation issues, the FYR Macedonia lacks: A. systematic soil monitoring, B. soil/land informational system, C. information on soil/land contamination to ensure healthy food production, D. an adequate system of land assessment (land classification), E. unified land inventory, F. implementation of rehabilitation and remedial measures, G. awareness regarding the significance of soil and land for sustainable development and survival of the population, H. adequate land use planning.

Present issues relevant for sustainable use of natural resources, along with the challenges connected to efficient land use are given in the National Strategy of Sustainable Development (NSSD) 2010 - 2030. Primary goals defined in the strategy for land management issues are: improvement of soil management and the prevention of land degradation. According to the NSSD, one of the first measures for achieving these goals is implementation of measures envisaged UNCCD, namely through development of NAP.

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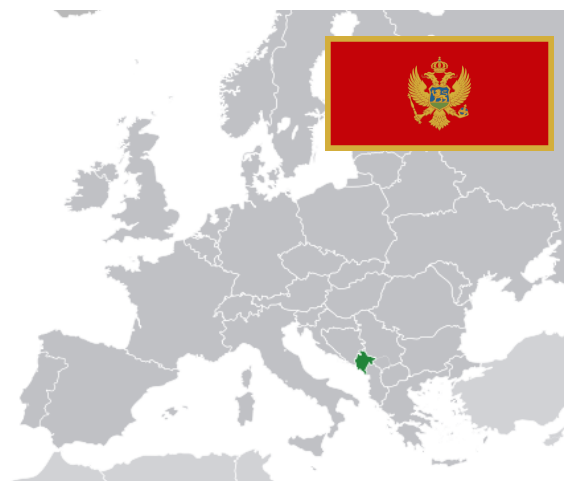
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MONTENEGRO

Montenegro is located in South East Europe. It has access to the Adriatic Sea to the southwest and borders Croatia, BiH, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania to with its total area of 13,812 km².

Climate is exceptionally mild and Mediterranean, with average air temperature in summer of 27,4 °C, maximum sea temperature of 27,1°C and lots of sunny days in the year. Montenegro's mountainous regions receive some of the highest amounts of rainfall in Europe. In the northern mountains of Montenegro, snow is present throughout the winter and lasts until May.

Diversity of geological base, landscape, climate and soil, as well as the very position of Montenegro on the Balkan peninsula and Adriatic sea, created conditions for formation of biological diversity with high values, placing Montenegro among the biological "hot-spots" of European and world biodiversity. Number of species per area unit Index in Montenegro is 0.837, which is among the highest indexes recorded in European countries.



Capital: Podgorica (and the largest city)

Population: 625,526 (2011 census)

Member of: UN, World Trade Organization, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Council of Europe, Central European Free Trade Agreement, founding member of the Union for Mediterranean, candidate for member in the EU and NATO (since 2005)

World Development Indicators for Montenegro

| Indicator | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$) | 12,720.00 | 13,040.00 | 13,930.00 |
| Population, total | 620,078.00 | 620,644.00 | 621,081.00 |
| GDP (current US\$) | 4,114,780,573.50 | 4,501,811,520.00 | 4,231,452,000.00 |
| GDP growth (annual %) | 2.50 | 3.20 | 0.50 |
| Life expectancy at birth, total (years) | 74.31 | 74.50 | |

Source: World Data Bank, September 2013

Key Land Degradation Issues

Montenegro is a transition economy and faces challenges with regards to land degradation. Land use in Montenegro suffers from inadequate and irrational planning of resource utilization. Agricultural land covers about 38% of Montenegro; the total agricultural area is 518,064 ha, but not all can be used because of orography and relief. Arable land is around 10-12% of the agricultural land but has decreased from 53,000 ha in 1995 to 44,800 ha in 2006. The area of uncultivated land is permanently increasing, while the pasture area is stable.

Loss of agricultural land in most cases results from unplanned construction of residential and industrial facilities and infrastructure, irrational exploitation of mineral raw materials, and migration from rural areas to main commercial centers. It is estimated that in Montenegro 25,000 m³ of soil is being destroyed annually.

Present issues relevant for sustainable use of natural resources in Montenegro, along with challenges connected to the efficient land use are given in the NSSD, which is harmonized with the Mediterranean and EU Sustainable Strategy. For land management, primary goals defined in the NSSD are the improvement of soil management and the prevention of land degradation.

Participation of Montenegro in the Convention

Montenegro ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in March 2007. Due to the recent ratification of the Convention, Montenegro has submitted the First National Report to UNCCD in 2012. Data collection for reporting purposes lacks homogeneity and collaboration among relevant institutions needs to be strengthened by introducing a framework system of data collection and sharing.

The development of NAP to combat land degradation and its integration into the National Development Strategy, PRSP and other relevant national strategies and documents in Montenegro was highlighted in the First National Report on the implementation of the UNCCD, as one of the urgent measures in addressing the problem of land degradation. The process of NAP development in Montenegro is initiated in the second half of 2013.

Main issues related to land degradation and loss of productive agricultural land are: A. destruction of soil caused by exploitation of raw materials, B. sand and gravel extractions from river beds, C. raw material extraction, D. urbanization E. industrial pollution, F. increase in soil acidity, G. erosion and landslides, H. deforestation.

Other problems that affect land use are: i) lack of systematic soil monitoring, ii) lack of a soil/land information system, iii) lack of information on soil/land contamination to ensure healthy food production, iv) lack of an adequate system of land assessment (land classification), v) lack of a unified land inventory, vi) lack of implementation of rehabilitation and remedial measures, vii) low level of awareness regarding the significance of soil and land for sustainable development and survival of the population, viii) low level of land use planning, and ix) lack of land maps that would serve for better physical and land use planning.

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