Bosnia and Herzegovina and FAO

Partnering for sustainable agricultural and rural development

Since the Bosnia and Herzegovina joined FAO in 1993, the Organization has played an active role in the implementation of national agricultural and rural development plans. Technical assistance has focused on policy advice, capacity building and – more specifically – the inclusion of family farms in high-quality food value chains. A major feature of current cooperation concerns the country’s preparation for accession to the European Union.

Towards EU membership

Independent and objective analyses of value chains – running from the agricultural producer to the market – is an important part of the European Union accession process. To support Bosnia and Herzegovina’s preparation for EU membership, FAO’s Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia has developed seven sector reviews – at the state, entity and Brčko District level – on meat and dairy, fruit and vegetables, cereals, wine, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, and diversification, all with an emphasis on harmonization with EU legislation.

As a pre-candidate country, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot yet take full advantage of the EU’s IPA support. Preparations are being made and should be complete by the time Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes a candidate country and IPARD (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Rural Development) support is initiated.

Five of the seven sector reviews were published between April 2011 and June 2012 and the remaining two have been published into the local language. The country’s agricultural authorities very much appreciated the reviews, which contributed to a SWOT analysis of each sector, identifying and estimating investment needs and making policy recommendations.

Project funded under two separate agreements with the EU Delegation in Sarajevo.

Matching FAO’s expertise to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s development needs

FAO assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently shaped by the draft 2015-2017 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which identifies five priority areas:

- Policy assistance in institutional capacity building in the process of accession to the European Union, including enhancement of the legal and strategic framework to ensure sustainable management of natural, cultural and energy resources
- Improved quality and safety of food at all stages of the food chain, through enhanced capacity of inspection bodies and laboratories to analyse and monitor contaminants in the food and feed chains
- Sustainable management of forests and trees, encouraging wood mobilization and sustainable use of non-wood forest products
- Integration of family farms into value chains for sustainable improvements in smallholder livelihoods and rural development, including increased income-generation and competitiveness of small farms
- Enhancement of disaster risk reduction and management for resilient livelihoods, with a view to protecting people from shocks and strengthening their capacity to respond to and recover from disruptive events

Jointly developed with the Government and other partners, the CPF reflects relevant regional and national priorities for agriculture and rural development, including those contained in the Strategy of Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010-2014).

At the same time, the CPF is designed to support FAO’s strategic objectives and regional priorities and it is fully aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CONTACT

Vladimir Rakhmanin
ADG/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia
FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
34 Benczur utca
H-1068 Budapest, Hungary
Tel.: +36 1 4612000
E-mail: FAO-RO-Europe@fao.org
Rapid flood response

In May 2014, southeastern Europe experienced the worst flooding reported in more than a century, with damages to agriculture of around US$250 million (FAO estimates). The devastating floods and landslides seriously disrupted most agricultural value chains, particularly affecting small-scale farmers in many parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Financed in part by Austria and Belgium and implemented through the Organization’s Technical Cooperation Programme, FAO’s livelihood recovery effort targeted about 7,500 small-scale family-operated farms most in need of assistance. By the end of 2014, emergency relief to the value of US$1.3 million had been delivered in close cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Ministry of Agriculture as well as and local governments. Family farmers were provided with livestock feed, veterinary supplies and seed for fodder crops – mainly sourced from within the country.

Distribution of animal feed to small-scale livestock farmers was essential for enabling people to manage and resume animal production immediately after the floods. The provision of antibiotics and other veterinary inputs also helped prevent possible infections and disease outbreaks, while further support was directed towards recovery of production facilities. Livestock farmers also received animal health training in the context of floods.

Additional country-level work in the area of disaster preparedness and risk reduction has been initiated.

Promoting land consolidation

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy and a major contributor to food security for Bosnia and Herzegovina. To improve the sector’s productivity, however, considerable land consolidation is necessary to address the problem of land fragmentation. A large number of small and uncompetitive farms (numbering around 500,000) exist alongside larger state farms, many of which are not operating or are hampered by incomplete privatization processes.

Under its Technical Cooperation Programme, FAO has been implementing a two-phase project designed to support the preparation of a National Land Consolidation Strategy, together with the implementation of land consolidation pilot projects across the country.

A strategy framework paper has been finalized and a thorough analysis undertaken of the land administration system, the agricultural land market, and pre-war land consolidation procedures and experiences – arondacija and komasacijad – as well as lessons from pilots undertaken in Slovenia and Serbia.

Landowners were generally very interested in the results, and 98 percent of those interviewed expressed interest in participating in the project. While willingness to engage in sales or purchases varied, almost all interviewees wished to reduce fragmentation and improve farm structures.

A positive point was that state (entity) land was available for exchange and a private agricultural company was actively participating in the land consolidation process. The first land transactions or exchanges arranged under the project have been agreed and are in the process of registration, while re-allocation planning needs to be expedited. Phase II of the project is scheduled for completion by end-July 2015.