

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN THE CONTEXT OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL
COOPERATION FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF
BIODIVERSITY**

**Bosna i Hercegovina u kontekstu regionalne i globalne saradnje za zaštitu i održivo
korištenje biodiverziteta**

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Abstract

With the geographical position and climate conditions it has, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country of unique life forms and biodiversity. The flora, fauna and fungi of Bosnia and Herzegovina are among the most diverse in Europe, and the high level of endemism and relict species provide for the country's significance at the global biodiversity level (UNCBD, 2019).

Since 2002, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a party to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), has been following global trends of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Following the Convention, among others, six national reports were developed, as well as the Strategy and Action Plan for Protection of Biological Diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (NBSAP) by 2020. These documents seek to ensure that protection and sustainable use of biodiversity become inevitable principles when relevant sectoral policies, strategies and legislation at all governmental levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina are being developed. In 2013, the Bosnian-Herzegovina Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) portal for sharing information on biodiversity was established within the global network CBD CHM.

As a member country of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Bosnia and Herzegovina actively represents and advocates for the interests of Eastern Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant contribution to the preparation of a Regional and Sub-Regional Assessment for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Europe and Central Asia, which was adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of IPBES (Medellin, Colombia, March 2018).

In the context of regional and global cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly contributes to the organization of the workshop and the preparation of an Eastern European Action Document on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural

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Development, within BES-Net Dialogue. Bosnia and Herzegovina reaffirmed its commitment to the status of pollinators by accessing to the global Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators at the 6th IPBES Plenary Session.

Key words: biodiversity, sustainable use, conservation, UNCBD

INTRODUCTION - *Uvod*

Biological diversity by its definition is the variety of genes, species and communities of species, ecosystems and, more broadly, the diversity of the Earth as an integrated ecosystem. It also includes all living beings, from the simplest viruses to higher plants and animals, and underlines the existence and importance of diversity (SLAVIĆA and TRONTEL, 2010).

The benefits derived from ecosystem services should act as powerful incentives to conserve biodiversity (ANTON et al., 2010). Demand from ecosystem service beneficiaries and the supply of services by biodiversity operate and interact at different spatial and temporal scales. As such, gaining a basic understanding of the scales at which ecosystem services operate is integral to the development of any landscape-scale conservation programme (ANTON et al., 2010).

The extinction resulting from human activities throughout the world has caused great concern in the scientific community and among the general public (HUSTON and HUSTON, 1994). Local extinction of species can occur with a substantial delay following habitat loss or degradation (KUUSSAARI et al., 2009). Monitoring programmes are being increasingly used to assess spatial and temporal trends of biological diversity, with an emphasis on evaluating the efficiency of management policies (YOCCOZ et al., 2001).

Conflict between biodiversity conservation and human activities is becoming increasingly evident in all European landscapes. The intensification of agricultural and silvicultural practices, land abandonment and other land uses such as recreation and hunting are all potential threats to biodiversity that can lead to conflicts between stakeholders' livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. CORINE data show that in the period from 2000-2018, changes in the land use in Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred in a total area of 71,957 ha (LJUŠA and ČUSTOVIĆ, 2019). These changes have influence on biodiversity and preservation of the nature.

Protected areas have long been one of the main for safeguarding the world's biodiversity. But pressures on the environment caused by economic development and other human activities make it difficult to protect natural areas that are large enough to accommodate entire ecosystems. On the other hand, ecosystems need to be treated with care because they provide goods and services that are vitally important for human well-being (BENNETT, 2004).

Therefore, to address the ongoing global decline in biodiversity, identification of the main drivers responsible for conflicts between human activities and the conservation of biodiversity is much needed. In addition, promotion of management of

these conflicts is also important. The drivers of biodiversity conflicts are analysed in a European context for five habitat types: agricultural landscapes, forests, grasslands, uplands and freshwater habitats. A multi-disciplinary approach to conflict management implies active stakeholder involvement at every stage of conflict identification and management as well as a range of other approaches, including stakeholder dialogue and education, consumer education, improvement of political and legislative frameworks, financial incentives, and infrastructure planning (UNCBD, 2019).

As a member country to the UNCBD, Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to protect its biodiversity. Following the Convention, national reports have been submitted with detailed information on the country's progress made in biodiversity protection. In addition, experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina participate in various international platforms, projects, and assessments.

The NGO sector has a major role when it comes to communication, raising public awareness, and education on environmental protection and biological diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that deal with this issue, and are recognized as citizens' organisations or associations of professionals / experts (IUCN, 2019).

According to the recent data provided by the Aarhus Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are 141 registered NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina whose work programs and activities include environmental issues, including the values of biological diversity, with an emphasis on raising public awareness and education (IUCN, 2019).

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY- *Materijali i metode*

Within this paper, the main objective was to reflect the work done to this date and results achieved since BiH ratified the UNCBD in 2002. The methodology used in this paper reflects the activities and concrete steps taken to meet the conditions set out in the UNCBD. This paper was prepared based on information obtained from a desk review of background documents related to biodiversity and reports that Bosnia and Herzegovina has submitted. This paper contains systematically collected, sorted and processed information about biodiversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina that was done in accordance with the requests of the UNCBD.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as party to the UNCBD, follows the global trends in conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. As a result, it has brought together its potentials in actions undertaken within the Aichi Targets framework.

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in achieving goals set up in the UNCBD is rarely visible and recognized by the public, it is important to take into account that this is a transition country with a complex political system. Its economy lacks strong actors and support, while the legal framework is still under the process of approximation to the EU jurisdiction. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made notable steps due to her status which has been presented within this paper.

Implementation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) in Bosnia and Herzegovina - *Primjena Konvencije Ujedinjenih Nacija o biološkoj raznolikosti u Bosni i Hercegovini*

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity is generally accepted as a multilateral environmental agreement that provides a framework for protection of biological diversity as an essential principle for conservation of nature. UNCBD is one of the three key multilateral environmental agreements, called the Rio conventions. This year (2020) celebrates the 27th anniversary of implementation of UNCBD and this is an important year for humankind where we need to review achievements that we have made in the past 10 years and to review future steps for the post 2020 period to achieve the objectives from the UNCBD.

The objectives of the UNCBD are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from utilization of genetic resources (CBD, 2019).

As of 2020, the UNCBD has 196 parties. Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified it on October 4th 2002 and became a fully-fledged party to the Convention.

So far, Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed the Strategy and Action Plan for Protection of Biological Diversity for the period 2008-2015, as a first biological diversity issues. The adoption of the Strategy and Action Plan for Protection of Biological Diversity of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015–2020 represents a continuation of the UNCBD global strategic planning and reporting.

In cooperation with other relevant institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) Ministry of Environment and Tourism (pertaining to the entity Federation of BiH¹), as the designated National Focal Point (NFP). NFP of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the UNCBD, has special responsibility² for the overall achievement of the set-out targets (NBSAP BiH, 2019).

¹The country of BiH has been established by the Dayton Agreement, signed on 14 December 1995. BiH consists of three administrative units: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), the Republika Srpska (RS), and the Brčko District (BD). The FBiH is made up of 10 cantons, which are divided into municipalities. In the FBiH there are 79 municipalities altogether, while in the RS there are 62 municipalities. The City of Brčko is a separate administrative unit – a district. The Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Constitution states that jurisdiction in environmental issues is split between entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - FBiH and Republika Srpska - RS), the district of Brčko (BD), and at the cantonal/municipal level. The only institution at the state level with jurisdiction in environmental issues is the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MoFTER).

²The ‘National Focal Point to the Convention on Biological Diversity’ (CBD NFP) acts, on behalf of the national government, as a liaison with the international Secretariat of the Convention. The CBD NFP is in charge of the follow-up of the CBD implementation. It also acts as an umbrella structure for national focal points designated for specific thematic areas. Thematic areas already supported by an official national focal point are Access and Benefit Sharing, the Global Taxonomy Initiative, the Clearing- House Mechanism, the Global Plant Conservation Strategy and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's First National Report to the UNCBD was named *Bosnia and Herzegovina – Land of Diversity* and was submitted in 2008. Until today, Bosnia and Herzegovina has prepared six national reports in accordance with the UNCBD Secretariat's guidelines. In addition, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made concrete steps in implementation of the UNCBD through a number of other complex actions.

Protected areas and sustainable use of Biodiversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina - *Zaštićena područja i održiva upotreba biodiverziteta u Bosni i Hercegovini*

Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by its unique mosaic of biodiversity. A prerequisite for such natural wealth of the country lies in its geomorphologic structure, the three climatic regions (continental, alpine and mediterranean), northern plains along the Sava River to the Dinarides mountain chain and the Adriatic coast in the south. As such, biological diversity is one of the key natural resources that provides for interaction between human life and nature and creates conditions for great touristic potential.

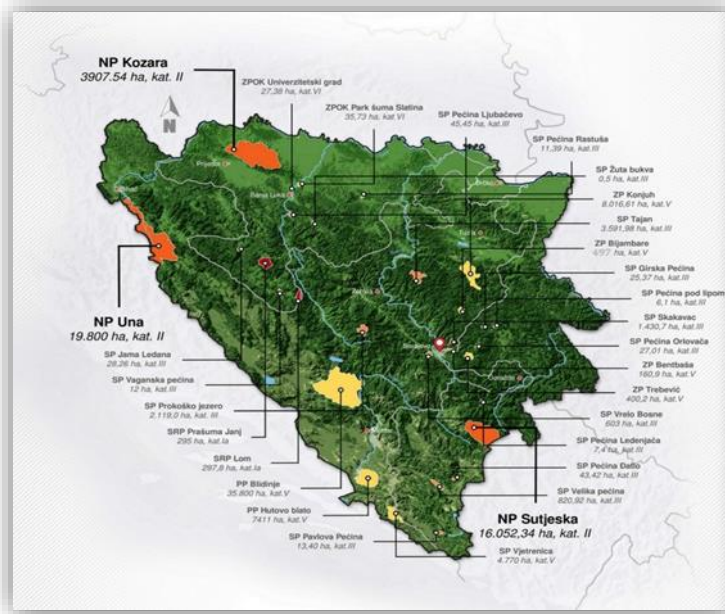


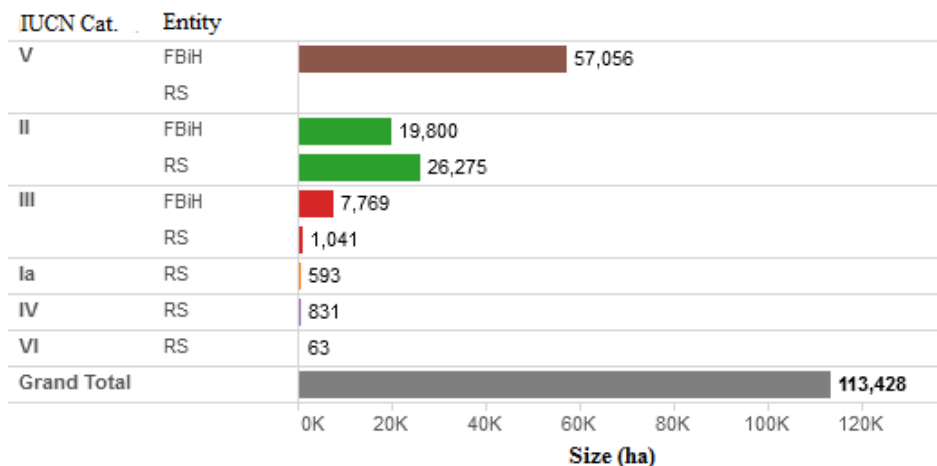
Figure 1. The map¹ of Protected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina with information about their size expressed in ha (USAID BIH, 2019)

Slika 1. Mapa zaštićenih područja u Bosni i Hercegovini izražena u ha (USAID BIH, 2019).

¹Map shows the protected areas on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina with information about their size (expressed in ha). The colour of spots used in Map 1. that represent the protected areas are in line with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories of Protected Areas (Graph 1).

Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Context of Regional and Global Cooperation for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

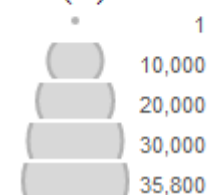
Size of Protected Areas



IUCN Category

- Ia
- II
- III
- IV
- V
- VI

Size (ha)



Graph1.Chart³ representing the IUCN categories of Protected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with their size expressed in ha (USAID BiH, 2019).

Grafikon 1. IUCN kategorije zaštićenih područja u Bosni i Hercegovini u skladu sa njihovom veličinom izraženom u hektarima (USAID BiH, 2019).

Currently, the UNEP/GEF project „Achieving biodiversity conservation through creation, effective management and spatial designation of protected areas and capacity building (2016-2020) “is being implemented in cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina governmental institutions. The project’ goal is to support the expansion of current national protected areas system and to encourage effective management and mainstreaming of biodiversity into production landscape. Full implementation of this

project, in accordance with the Aichi target 11 (Protected Areas), is a very important step in Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards the EU. Until 2019, this project is expected to increase national protected areas network, which currently represents 2.7 percent of total Bosnia and Herzegovina's territory. The aim of the project is to proclaim eight new protected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Livanjsko Polje; Orjen – Bijela Gora; Bjelašnica – Igman – the canyon of the river Rakitnica – Treskavica – Visočica; Cave of Mokranjska Miljacka spring; Tišina; Botanical-floristic Reserve Mediteranetum; Cave System Vjetrenica and Cave System Govještica.

Map 2. shows the locations of the planned new protected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As it can be seen on the Graph 1., the biggest share of protected areas in hectares is declared as Category V in accordance with IUCN classification.

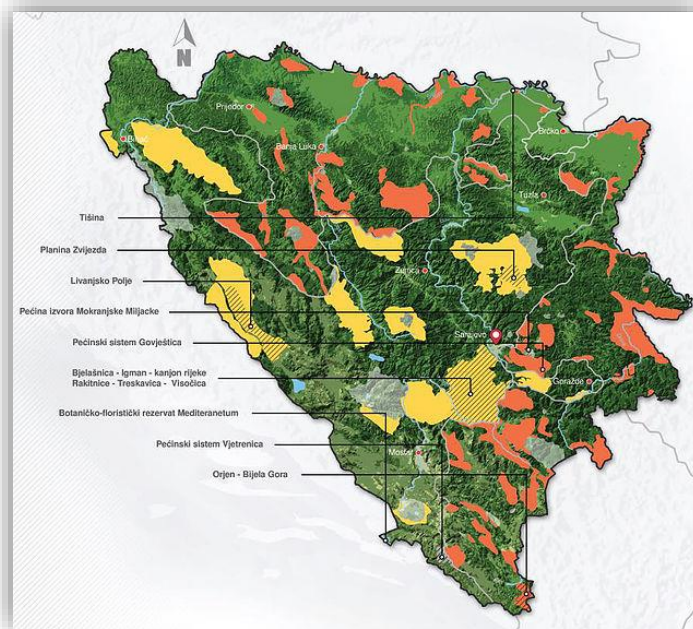


Figure 2. New planned protected nature areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked in yellow colour (UNEP, 2019)

Slika 2. Nova planirana zaštićena područja u Bosni i Hercegovini obilježena žutom bojom (UNEP, 2019)

Red List of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Crvena lista Bosne i Hercegovine

The IUCN Red List is regarded as an important barometer of the health of biodiversity, and is explicitly listed in the targets set by the UN CBD. The authority of the Red List lies in use of a standardized method for evaluating a defined measure of

conservation concern: a species at risk of extinction within a short period of time. This standardized system, the Red List Categories and Criteria, evaluates the available data on a species distribution, population status and threats against each of five Criteria (A-E), to determine its risk of extinction (IUCN, 2019).

In the FBiH, the “Red List of wild species and subspecies of plants, animals and fungi” was adopted in 2014, while in Republika Srpska (RS), the “Red List of Protected Species of Flora and Fauna“ was adopted in 2012. These two documents were a kick starter to a fight for the preservation of rare and endangered species of plants and animals such as lynx, chamois and many various birds and plants throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, the FBiH also adopted the “Red List of endangered fungi species”.

According to the adopted Red lists, the situation in FBiH and RS is as follows:

- Red List of RS contains 818 species of vascular plants; 304 bird species; 46 fish species; 57 mammal species; 20 amphibian species; 25 reptile species; 273 insect species (Official Gazette of RS, No. 124/12).
- Red List of the FBiH contains 658 plant species; 27 mammal species; 40 bird species; 6 reptile species; 4 amphibian species; 36 fish species, as well as a great number of different species of invertebrates (Official Gazette of FBiH, No. 7/14).

The above data shows that in total 1,029 species have been put on the FBiH Red List and 1,545 species on the RS Red List. Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state has not yet developed a Red Data Book of threatened species, which creates a conflict situation in terms of protection and conservation of species.

Regional and global cooperation - *Regionalna i globalna suradnja*

In the context of recent regional and global cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be an active member of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and was host to the BES-Net Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)- *Međunarodna platforma za biodiverzitet i ekosistemske servise (IPBES)*

The IPBES Platform is primarily established to be used as scientific support to the UN CBD as well as support to other international conventions that are in relation with the UN CBD. The Platform aims to achieve its goals through the assessments which are being prepared by the experts.

As one of the member countries of the IPBES, Bosnia and Herzegovina and its team of experts participate in the development of the regional biodiversity assessment for Europe and Central Asia region. Bosnia and Herzegovina actively represent and advocates the interests of the Eastern Europe UN region, especially regarding the

capacity building needs and the status/availability of data and knowledge on biodiversity. Bosnia and Herzegovina's experts have made a significant contribution to the preparation of a Regional and Sub-Regional Assessment for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Europe and Central Asia, which was adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of IPBES held in Medellin (Colombia) in March 2018. During this Plenary Session, Bosnia and Herzegovina also joined to the global Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators.

BES-Net Trialogue on Pollinators, Food Security and Rural Development - *BES-Net Trialog o polinatorima, sigurnosti hrane i ruralnom razvoju*

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) is a capacity sharing “network of networks” that promotes dialogue among science, policy, and practice for more effective management of biodiversity and ecosystems, contributing to the long-term human well-being and sustainable development (IUCN, 2019).

The first BES-Net Trialogue was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 18-20 October 2017 and involved 52 stakeholders from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Montenegro.

During the Eastern European BES-Net Trialogue, the stakeholders identified and collectively agreed upon the strategic regional and national actions to address the problems that pollinators face.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has more than half of its surface area (63 percent) covered with forest and forestland (WWF, 2019), and 106,300 ha or 2.7 percent of the country's territory under protected areas (UNEP BiH, 2019). These areas are important for the BES Net Trialogue due to traditional agricultural activities including grazing, honey production and more recent tourism. Tourism is seen as a big opportunity for recovering economy of the country and is an important development driver (IUCN, 2019) especially rural tourism.

The BiH internet portal Clearing House Mechanism - CHM BiH - *Internet portal Clearing House Mechanism u Bosni i Hercegovini – CHM BiH*

The BiH internet portal with the mechanism for exchange of information on biological diversity – Clearing House Mechanism (CHMBiH), was established in 2013. The goal of the CHM is to provide comprehensive information on biological diversity through effective information services not only for the general public, but also for all stakeholders. The internet portal also allows for technical and scientific cooperation, exchange of knowledge and information flow which helps all decisionmakers and all stakeholders in meeting their obligations defined by the UNCBD (NBSAP BiH, 2019).

The CHM BiH is a platform that contains many relevant data, strategic plans, national reports, legislation and other documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina relevant for the overall portfolio of the UNCBD and its Protocols. It has a significant role in

the implementation of the UNCBD and its Global Strategic Biodiversity Plan (2010-2020), through the exchange of information, data, experience, scientific achievements and other relevant content with the aim to make an interaction of all member countries and other stakeholders.

At the 13th Conference of the States Parties to the UNCBD, by a decision of a special jury established by the UNCBD Secretariat, and in competition among all 196 members of the UNCBD, Bosnia and Herzegovina received the award for the best newly established national CHM. The CHM BiH is available at: www.bih-chm-cbd.ba.

CONCLUSION - Zaključak

Nature conservation is crucial for the coexistence of all species that reside in it and depend on natural resources. Throughout its entire history, nature has played a crucial role for human kind existence and we need to leave it in the best possible condition to the future generations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is fortunate enough to be a country rich in biodiversity. For this purpose, development of various action plans, legislative initiatives, and project activities remains crucial for protection of its natural wealth.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a member country to the UNCBD and an active member of platforms of international significance for biodiversity and nature protection (such as IPBES, BES-Net and others), significantly contributes to the development of regional and global efforts of nature and the best ways of preserving it.

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SAŽETAK

Bosna i Hercegovina je, zahvaljujući svojim geografskim položajem i klimatskim uslovima, zemlja bioraznolikosti, zemlja jedinstvenih životnih oblika. Flora, fauna i gljive Bosne i Hercegovine su među najraznolikijim u Europi, a visok nivo broja endema i reliktnih vrsta osigurava značaj zemlje na globalnom nivou staništa biološke raznolikosti (UNCBD, 2019).

Bosna i Hercegovina, kao članica Konvencije Ujedinjenih nacija za biološku raznolikost (UNCBD) od 2002. godine slijedi globalne svjetske trendove o očuvanju i održivom korištenju biološke raznolikosti. Prema Konvenciji, između ostalog do sada je urađeno šest nacionalnih izvještaja, kao i Strategija i akcioni plan za zaštitu biološke raznolikosti Bosne i Hercegovine (NBSAP) do 2020. godine. Ovim dokumentima se nastoji postići da zaštita i održivo korištenje biološke raznolikosti bude nezaobilazna oblast u izradi relevantnih sektorskih politika, strategija i legislative na svim nivoima vlasti u državi Bosni i Hercegovini. U 2013. godini uspostavljen je bosanskohercegovački internet portal CHM BiH (engl. Clearing House Mechanism) za razmjenu informacija o biološkoj raznolikosti u okviru globalne mreže CBD CHM. Kao jedna od zemalja članica Međuvladine naučno-političke platforme za biološku raznolikost i usluge ekosistema (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - IPBES), Bosna i Hercegovina aktivno predstavlja i zastupa interese regiona Istočne Europe. Bosna i Hercegovina je dala značajan doprinos pripremi Regionalne i subregionalne procjene za biodiverzitet i ekosistemske servise Europe i Centralne Azije, koja je prihvaćena na Šestoj plenarnoj sjednici IPBES-a, održanoj u Medellinu (Kolumbija) u martu 2018. godine.

U kontekstu regionalne i globalne saradnje važan je doprinos Bosne i Hercegovine u organizaciji radionice i pripremi regionalnog Akcijskog dokumenta o oprašivačima, sigurnosti hrane i ruralnom razvoju za istočnu Europu, u okviru Prvog BES-Net trijaloga. Posvećenost stanju oprašivača Bosna i Hercegovina je potvrdila pristupom globalnoj Koaliciji za polinatore, upriličenoj na 6. plenarnoj sjednici IPBES-a.

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