

BUILDING BACK BETTER IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Supporting Resilience in Reconstruction

AT A GLANCE

Country Bosnia and Herzegovina

Risks Flooding and landslide risk from extreme precipitation

Area of Engagement Resilient Recovery

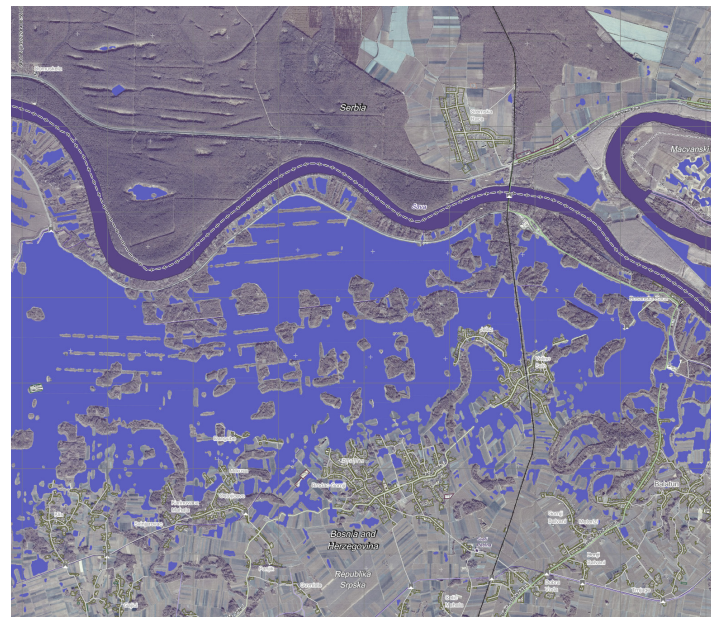
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, close local and regional coordination allowed for quick recovery from devastating floods

A RECURRING RISK OF FLOODING

Between May 14 and May 17, 2014, more rain fell in Bosnia and Herzegovina than typically falls in three months. Rivers swelled, mountains eroded, and disaster struck the country. This flood – the worst in recorded history – affected more than 1 million people (25% of the population) and caused estimated damages and losses equivalent to nearly 15% of the country's GDP. In a country where one-fifth of the workforce is employed in agriculture, river floods inundated newly plowed fields and ravaged 81 municipalities, severely disrupting the economy and imperiling livelihoods.

With more than 2,500 km² of territory prone to flooding, Bosnia and Herzegovina is particularly vulnerable to extreme precipitation and river basin flooding, which have intensified in recent years. Despite improved emergency services, floods and landslides represent a recurring risk, as seen in December 2010 and May 2014. Currently, the country's annual average population affected by flooding exceeds 100,000, and the annual average impact on GDP is nearly \$600 million. The most productive regions are also among the most exposed areas of the country as they are located around the Sava, Drina, Bosna, and Vrbas rivers. These regions have many agricultural holdings, industrial facilities, energy plants, and touristic sites.

A map showing the extent of the 2014 floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina



FROM DISASTER TO A STRATEGY FOR RESILIENCE

In response to the flooding in 2014, a Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) was launched by the Governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina with support from the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), the World Bank, the European Union, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The RNA helped the Governments to quantify damages and, equally important, provided timely technical assistance to launch decisive reconstruction efforts. This expert assistance identified opportunities for integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation consideration into national and

subnational recovery and development strategies. By doing so, the technical assistance helped to:

- ▶ Facilitate donor coordination and prioritize the most flood-affected areas;
- ▶ Support a “build back better” principle in rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts; and
- ▶ Ensure that gender-responsive activities – such as mapping vulnerable groups and expanding SOS telephone lines – are a key part of the recovery process.

Following the RNA, the World Bank-financed Flood Emergency Recovery Project was launched, providing assistance to 640,000 people in flood-affected areas. Technical assistance will continue to strengthen the protection capacity of civil society, as well as regional cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro to improve integrated river basin flood risk management.

LESSONS LEARNED

In order to strengthen resilience against future shocks, recovery planning must include considerations for reducing the inequalities that create vulnerability.

For example, dedicating resources to women’s economic and political empowerment, and enabling equal participation in all disaster-related forums, will be key to building back better to reduce future disaster risks.

Decision-makers can increase ownership and accountability by partnering with local governments to identify rehabilitation measures.

During recovery, decision-making authority was assigned as close as possible to affected persons, improving local ownership and enhancing the accountability of local authorities. The Flood Emergency Recovery Project enabled national and local governments to set their own priorities among pre-selected intervention options in order to improve living conditions within their respective communities.



Improved flood protection for 640,000 citizens

EMERGENCY FUNDS RAISED

The Recovery Needs Assessment’s findings, which estimated damages and losses at \$2.7 billion, leveraged \$100 million from the World Bank IDA’s Crisis Response Window. Those funds helped to finance emergency goods and rehabilitate more than 320 public infrastructure facilities to pre-flood conditions, in addition to 261 km of regional roads and 25 local bridges that were heavily damaged.

LIVELIHOOD RESTORED

More than 150,000 people received emergency assistance, which included agricultural goods (seeds, irrigation equipment, and greenhouses) to restore livelihoods, and construction materials to rebuild damaged houses.

RIVER FLOOD RISKS MITIGATED

More than 640,000 people, nearly half of whom are women, have benefitted from rehabilitated infrastructure and flood protection in affected areas since the 2014 floods. The Flood Emergency and Recovery Project and the Drina Flood Protection Project were designed to better ensure that floods, landslides, and other natural disasters are averted if and when possible.

“When the floods happened, it was night. In the morning, we saw what happened. You don’t believe anyone will help, however, we received a lot of support. We were motivated by all the help we received, and we recovered fast – in about a year.”

-- Sudo Forto, farmer, Gorazde, Bosnia and Herzegovina