

Template for national background reports

Title: National background report on Health for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Author(s): Mirsada Hukic and Stevan Trbojevic

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Executive Summary

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Introduction

1. Purpose of the national background report and methodology/summary of the consultation process

The aim of this brief report for scientific-research field in specific theme Health is to find out existing scientific-research capacities and resources in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to establish mid-term and long-term priorities in this field of research and innovations.

2. The Health S&T system in B&H

Interaction in the health S&T system are divided to entity level, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and Republica Srpska (RS). In RS, financing of scientific researches is conducted and coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Technology of RS, together with mutual coordination with the Ministry of Health and Social Care of RS. The financing of scientific research in the health in FB&H is complex system. There are two levels. The first level is consisted of ten Cantonal Ministries for education and science and ten Cantonal Ministries of Health. Federal Ministry of Education and science and Federal Ministry of Health are second level. The Ministry of Civil Affairs B&H only has a coordinative role in the process of scientific research in the field of health in the part referring to international cooperation.

2.1 The B&H and Health policy framework

Framework policies in health research belong exclusively to entities (RS) and Cantons (FB&H) which is based upon constitutional defined jurisdiction of entities/cantons and their ministries. Regarding policies in Health S&T, in RS they are based on strategy defined together by the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Health and Social Care RS.

2.1.1 The overall Health policy framework

“General or National” framework for defining policy in health research does not exist at the B&H level due to the fact that on that level, there are no national Ministry of Health or some other national agency with the aim to create and carry on the activities connected with defining scientific-research policies in health.

2.1.2 The elements of Health research policy making

There are several national strategies created by the Ministry of Health RS and Ministry of Health FB&H, but they are not research strategies. As far as S&T strategies in health are concerned, the Ministries of Science has not made them yet. The Ministry of Civil Affairs B&H is preparing Strategy R&T of B&H including and the health S&T.

2.2 Overview of Health research activities

- projects about prevention of infectious and malignant diseases

2.2.1 Health research projects

- The researchers project were aimed in the solving the diagnostic and therapeutic problems of tuberculosis, AIDS, hepatitis C, emerging zoonoses (brucellosis), transplantation of the organs and making the register of malignant diseases etc.

2.2.2 Key competencies in Health research fields

- Existence of internationally recognized researchers and research groups in the specific fields of science, the broad spectrum of neglected diseases and pathogens as well as emerging and reemerging diseases.

2.2.3 Health research infrastructure

The R&D institutions in general have a rather obsolete research infrastructure compared with international organizations and this is an obstacle to international research co-operation

- most important relevant institutions (political, administrative, higher education, public/private research institutions)

Ministry of civil affairs B&H
Ministry of Health FB&H
Ministry of Health RS
Ministry of science and technology of RS
Ministry of education and science of FB&H
Medical Faculty Sarajevo
Medical Faculty Banja Luka
Medical Faculty Tuzla
Medical Faculty Mostar
Medical Faculty Foca
Clinical Center Sarajevo
Clinical Center Tuzla
Clinical Center Banja Luka
Clinical Center East Sarajevo
Clinical Center Mostar
Institute of Public Health Banja Luka
Institute of Public Health Sarajevo
Hemofarm Banja Luka
Bosnalijek Sarajevo
Pharmacia Tuzla

2.3 Key drivers of Health research

Development of research capacities for neglected, rare diseases specific for the region such as nephropatia epidemica.

2.3.1 Main Health sector trends in B&H

In the field of public health

2.3.2 Main socio-economic challenges in B&H

Lack of collaboration between research institutions and stake holders, low competence and capacities for international research funds application.

3. Integration of B&H in the European Research Area in the field of Health

Integration of BiH in European Research Area can further develop in the field of emerging viral diseases and artificial intelligence.

4. SWOT analysis of the Health research capacity in B&H

4.1 Strengths

- **Improved legislation in the field of science and high education in B&H.**
- **Unity of scientific-research work and education process, based as legal principle**
- **Better operational possibility of University units in business and income managing**
- **Higher budget support for science and research**
- **Strategic commitment of all Ministries of Science and Technologies for extra support of programs and projects connected to international scientific-research cooperation in the future.**
- **Relatively small and flexible scientific- research system.**
- **Existence of internationally recognized researchers and research groups in the specific fields**
- **Certain number of senior scientific staff with long experience and certain acquaintance abroad.**

4.2 Weaknesses

- **Insufficiently made institutional capacities of scientific-research institutions for participation in European programs for science and high education.**
- **Low level of knowledge and expertise for participation in international projects and programs**
- **Old fashioned equipment and infrastructure at some scientific-research institutions.**
- **Lack of quality staff, especially at research institutions.**
- **Most of the researchers, mostly younger, are overloaded with class work and professional commitments so they do not have enough time to conduct a scientific research.**
- **Young researches are leaving universities to work in different fields because of better salary and better standard of life.**
- **The quality mechanisms that will attract young researches to do quality research are not set.**
- **There is not enough international experience during and after post-graduate study.**
- **Lack of involvement of younger staff in international scientific-research projects**

- **There are not enough research projects that involve commercial business.**
- **Weak inter-university cooperation.**
- **There is no international assessment of research results and evaluation projects based on international experience.**
- **There is no access to relevant international journals and data bases**
- **Nonexistence of professional scientific management and professional administration for project monitoring and scientific activity.**
- **Nonexistence of IT system for monitoring of the scientific activity and resources.**

4.3 Opportunities

- **Additional public funds for infrastructure investments in scientific-research base**
- **Full membership of B&H in programs such as FP 7, COST and EUREKA, since January 2009.**
- **More intensive participation in international research project and better use of EU funds.**
- **Introduction of quality criteria for awards and employing young researchers**
- **Introduction of clear criteria for the awarding of financial support for the ministries of health and sciences according to the national priorities.**
- **Linkage of universities and clinical centers through joint scientific and development projects.**
- **Linkage with top foreign universities through joint scientific and development projects.**
- **Better use of national technology projects and stronger ties with health and business on commercially focused projects.**
- **Commitment of the most scientific staff for further reforms**
- **Organized studies for greater number of different scientific areas and fields.**
- **Organization of greater number of doctoral studies based on European experience, which would create certain number of new staff Universities and institutes.**
- **Better accessibility to international scholarships and better mobility**
- **New concept of organizing expert services of high education and research institutions and rational usage of unacademic staff.**
- **Better accessibility to the capital equipment and library funds. Referent center for scientific information**
- **NUBBIH provides access in several international multidiscipline databases.**
- **Recent formation of data base E-CRIS and library-informatics system COBISS, with mutual action of the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Science and Technology RS.**

4.4 Threats

- **Weak connection of national program RTD priorities with program priorities of other states and European scientific programs.**
- **There are no serious attempts for establishment of bilateral and multilateral functional mechanisms for researchers' mobility, based on the reciprocity principle.**
- **Weak functional organization at scientific-research institutes, as well as their complete absence in international science-technology cooperation.**
- **Younger researches are leaving for the foreign countries because of better conditions for the scientific research.**
- **Complicate process of obtaining visas as well as a lot of others administrative obstacles which complicate mobility of local scientist.**
- **Extremely complicate and long process of diploma recognition obtained at foreign high education institutions.**
- **There is no clearly defined financing policy for high education sector and scientific-research institutes in RS, FB&H, B&H**

5. Health research priorities for B&H

Major research priority in B&H in health is public health, sector on which all department bodies (stakeholders) put the accent in B&H. This sector is not only important for health but it represents major challenge in the economic and social sense as well.

5.1 Health Research priorities on the basis of the country's readiness*

- 5.1.1 Priority 1 (incl. explanation and if possible give further specification for sub-Theme, area, activity...) - Public Health
- 5.1.2 Priority 2 - Biomedical Research
- 5.1.3 Priority 3 - Oncology research
- 5.1.4. Priority 4 - Rehabilitation and physical medicine
- 5.1.5 Priority 5 - Mental Health

5.2 Health Research priorities on the basis of future potential**

- 5.2.1 Priority 1
- 5.2.2 Priority 2
- 5.2.3

Annex I. Classification of the Health research fields

* Definition: **Readiness**: priorities for which the country has the appropriate human resources and research infrastructures in order to pursue research and development

** **Potential**: priorities that are considered attractive for the country and have future potential. However, the level of readiness and capacity to pursue research and development is currently low.