
Strategic Framework

Of the Network of Aarhus Centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina
2018-2021

Strategic Framework of the network of Aarhus Centres in BiH covering the period 2018 - 2021 was prepared by the representatives of Centre for the Environment, Centre for Ecology and Energy and the Aarhus Centre in BiH, with support from the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are grateful to individuals who took part in the workshops and thus made personal contribution to development of this document.

Sarajevo, November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The current version of the Strategic Framework represents an examination of all components the Aarhus Centres' (AC) work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, conducted in a strategic planning workshop on 29 October 2018 and ensuing online consultations. The contents of the document are informed by more than five years of the network's existence. The network was formally established on 11 April 2013 in Sarajevo, under the auspices of the OSCE Mission to BiH, with Resource Aarhus Centre in BiH (AC Sarajevo), Centre for Ecology and Energy (AC Tuzla) and Centre for the Environment (AC Banja Luka) as members.

In their work, Aarhus Centres network are guided by the following documents:

- Aarhus Centres Guidelines, published by the OSCE (2009)¹

This framework outlines the Vision, Values, Mission, Theory of Change, Principles of Cooperation and Strategic Goals of the BiH Aarhus Centres network.

¹ Text of the guidelines can be found here: <https://www.osce.org/eea/40506>

2. VISION

Aarhus Centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina are supporting, with commitment, expertise and integrity, the citizens exercise their rights in all environmental decision-making processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aiming to achieve sustainability and environmental protection.

3. VALUE STATEMENT

The activities of BiH Aarhus Centres' Network are based on the following core values:

- Operate within the confines of its mission statement and within the spirit of the Aarhus Convention
- Be **representative, inclusive, impartial and non-profit-making**
- Be clear on its role, functions and competencies
- Demonstrate a **professional ethos** and working practices, by working efficiently and effectively, and with an emphasis on maximising the positive impact of its interventions
- Strive for the highest possible **quality and reliability of the information** it provides and services it offers
- Be **transparent and accountable** towards stakeholders, where disclosure does not contradict the bounds of confidentiality
- Act in a **co-operative, open and participatory** way, by working equally or in partnership with all stakeholders
- Follow a **rights-based approach**, ensuring that gender equality, multicultural/multiethnic representation, and minority participation and rights are promoted by the Network's activities
- **Avoid any conflict of interest**, particularly between the interests of stakeholders and donors, and unnecessary competition, particularly with reference to NGOs
- Encourage **ownership and involvement of relevant stakeholders** in its work, by recognising the common goal of all in implementing the Aarhus Convention.

4. THEORY OF CHANGE

The Aarhus Centres believe that *if* environmental authorities were more inclusive, proactive and transparent in their work, and *if* citizens were informed and aware of their rights and responsibilities in ensuring environmental protection, with support from civil society organizations, *then* greater sustainability would be ensured *because* participatory environmental governance and citizen awareness and activism can contribute to a healthier and cleaner environment.

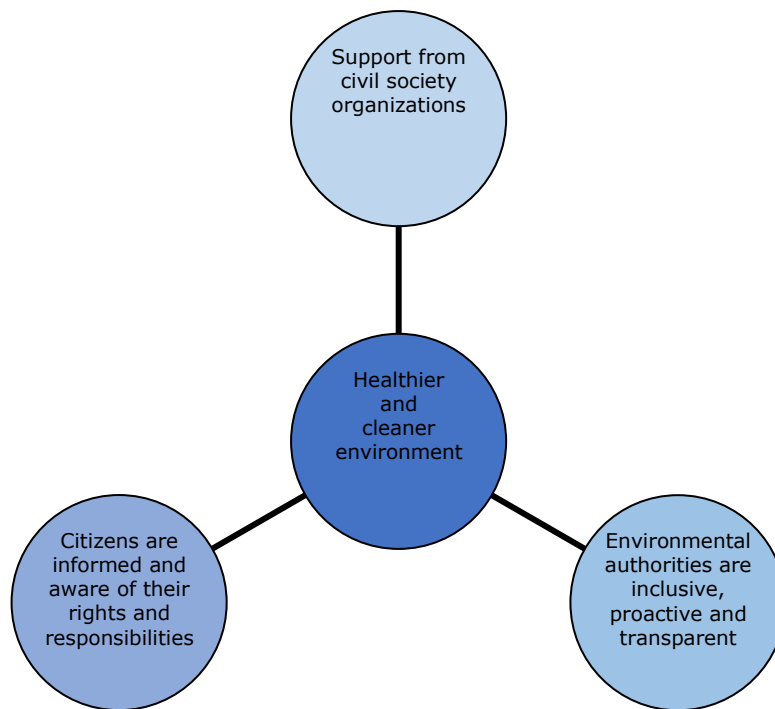


Figure 1 Theory of Change for BiH AC Network

5. MISSION

Aarhus Centres:

- Collect, analyse, process and exchange environmental information to raise awareness of citizens,
- Train interested parties on the subject of Aarhus Convention provisions and national and EU environmental law,
- Urge transparency and commitment of public administration
- Promote active participation of citizens in environmental decision-making,
- Provide legal support to civil society and interested citizens in the area of protection of environmental rights.

6. PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION

1. Cooperation based on principles of mutual consultations, understanding and the need to work together.
2. Exchange of relevant information on implementation of joint activities in the form of campaigns, projects, development of strategic documents, etc.
3. Mutual exchange of know-how and support needed for implementation of jointly agreed modes of cooperation.
4. Transparency in implementation of all forms of cooperation.
5. While disseminating information on the activities implemented to the public, the parties shall promote each other.
6. During engagement in their respective associations, representatives of the network shall refrain from membership in political parties or promotion of party platforms.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF NETWORK MEMBERSHIP:

Associations in of the Network of Aarhus Centres shall be required to:

- a) Promote knowledge and implementation of the Aarhus Convention on the part of the institutions responsible for environmental protection, private sector, media, judiciary, non-governmental institutions and public at large,
- b) Promote cooperation among institutions responsible for environment protection, non-governmental institutions and other counterparts, with the view of promotion of implementation of the Convention;
- c) Serve as a platform for establishment of coalitions of non-governmental organisations involved in environment protection and interested citizens.

The objectives specified above, shall be accomplished through:

- a) Distribution of information on environmental issues and dissemination of such information to citizens;
- b) Organisation of seminars for representatives of public administration and non-governmental organisations on the subject of implementation of the Aarhus Convention in practice;
- c) Provision of support in organising public consultation events on environmental issues, thus promoting public participation in decision-making;
- d) Provision of venues for organisation of workshops and training activities focusing on the Aarhus Convention or other related issues;
- e) Raising awareness of citizens on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;
- f) Provision of free-of-charge access to environmental non-governmental organisations and interested citizens regarding environmental resources and information received from environmental institutions responsible and from other sources.

8. STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

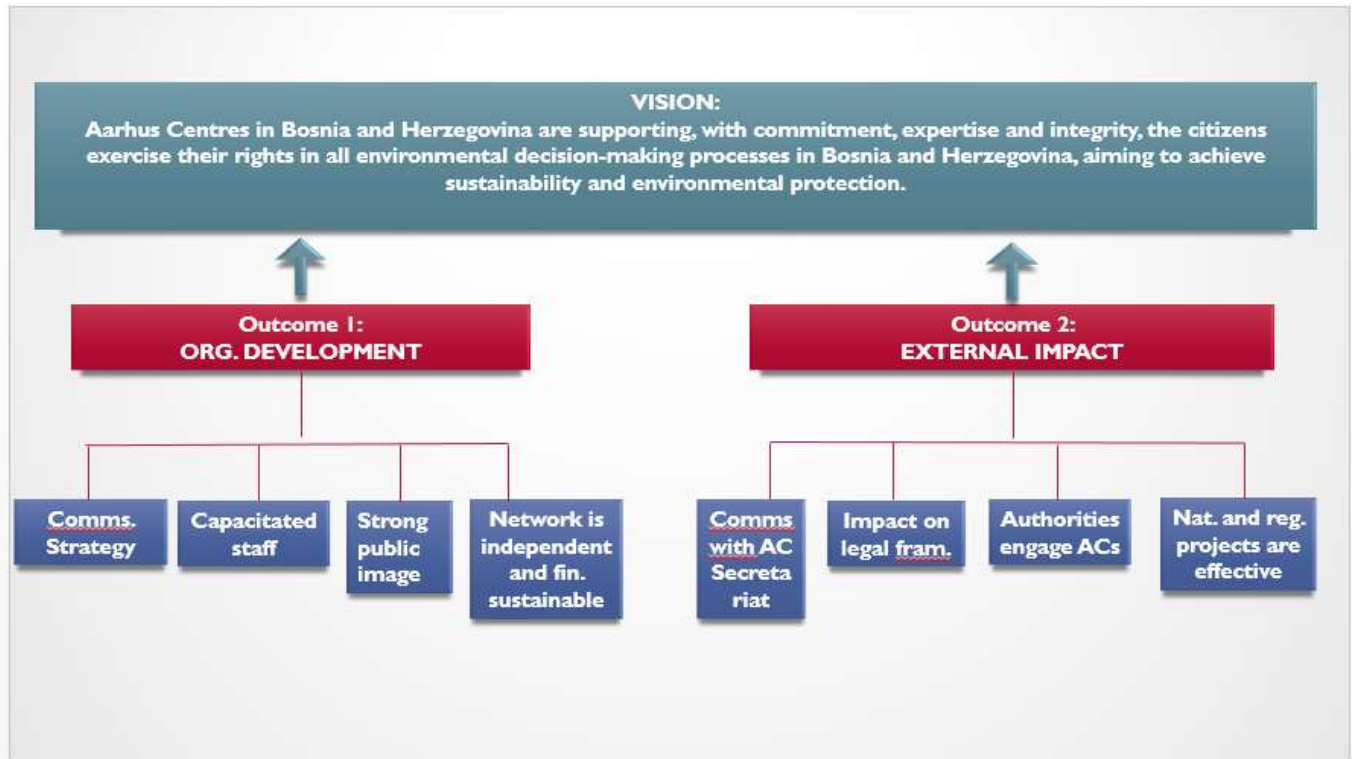


Figure 2 Result-based Framework

Goals of the network of Aarhus Centres may be divided into inward and outward oriented goals. Inward oriented goals concern **organizational development** of the Network and its members, while outward oriented goals related to **external impact** the Network aspires to attain.

Organizational Development Goals²

The Network members agree that more work needs to be done to further develop its institutional structure.

In this segment, the Aarhus Centres Network has four clearly defined Outputs:

1) Network has a developed and functional communication strategy (internal and external)

- 1.1 Promotion of use of forms of communication that bolster co-operation, motivation and business efficiency;

² Using result-based management analogy, Vision represents the Objective, while two streams of goals represent the Outcome-level of planning (i.e. the change we would like to see), made possible by a set of Outputs (organized in projects, activities, initiatives).

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- 1.2 Promotion of greater exchange of information, knowledge and experience in an expedite and direct manner that allows for significant resource savings.

2) Aarhus Centres have a public image and reputation built through engaging in issues of interest to citizens

- 2.1 Presentation of Aarhus Centres work and AC implementation to NGOs throughout BiH and promotion of Aarhus Centres Network in BiH;
- 2.2 Design and implementation of public awareness programmes in local communities about information access rights and participation in decision-making on spatial planning and other documents of relevance to environment;
- 2.3 Law clinic establishment on environmental issues with the aim of sharing practical knowledge in the field of Aarhus Convention.

3) Human resources in the Aarhus Centres are capable of transferring knowledge to other target groups (institutions, NGOs, citizens) on the more efficient implementation of the Aarhus Convention

- 1.1. Mapping of internal capacities in the Aarhus Centres Network
- 1.2. Attendance of educational seminars on all three pillars of the Convention in BiH and abroad
- 1.3. Internal exchange of knowledge and experiences within the national and regional Aarhus Centres Network
- 1.4. Development of a set of educational seminars per target group
- 1.5. Printing professional publications at regular intervals

4) The Aarhus Centres Network operates as an independent, self-reliant, financially sustainable and recognised network

- 1.1. Joint definition of needs and interests
- 1.2. Joint development and implementation of projects, initiatives and campaigns
- 1.3. Joint efforts to find financial resources for the work of the Network
- 1.4. Intra-Network support to related activities of Network members—possibly a short-term goal

Success Indicators:	Indicator Verification:
Increased number of questions posed by citizens and NGOs to the Aarhus Centres Network	Network records of questions and responses
Number of statements and comments in the media	Media articles, audio and video recordings
Increased number of NGOs the Network co-operates with	Minutes of meetings
	Joint activities
Successfully prepared and financed at least one joint project of the Network	Project documents
Increased number of invitations/information sent by institutions to the Network	E-mails/letters
Increased participation of the Network in the	Comments on laws and strategies

preparation of laws, strategies	
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External Impact Goals

External impact goals reflect the desired influence Network membership aspires to. In this segment, 3 medium-term goals:

1) Public authorities in charge of environmental protection involve the Aarhus Centres Network in their work

- 3.1 Monitoring activities on drafting and implementing documents, plans and projects; drafting opinions and media statements;
 - Target groups briefing at roundtables depending on the topic;
 - Working breakfasts with journalists, press conference per specific case;
- 3.2 Organising meetings and workshops with NGOs per specific case;
- 3.3 Initiating lobbying and advocating campaigns for NGO members' participation in document drafting.

2) The Aarhus Centres Network has an effect on the improvement of legislative framework for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in BiH

- 2.1. Establishment of co-operation with relevant representatives of legislative and executive authorities (per available capacities)
- 2.2. Participation in working groups and thematic parliamentary committees for the development of plans, legal regulations (per available capacities)
- 2.3. Development of legislative and policy proposals in co-operation with European organisations

3) The Aarhus Centres Network effectively communicates with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat

- 3.1. Presentation of the Network to the Aarhus Convention Secretariat
- 3.2. Participation in the relevant meetings of the Aarhus Convention
- 3.3. Communication with the Secretariat and information dissemination within the Network and beyond

4) National and regional projects, either initiated by the Network or those in which the Network participates, are effective

- 2.1. Initiative for educational and information-sharing meetings with other NGOs in BiH and in the region
- 2.2. Establishing needs and joint approaches with other NGOs in BiH and in the region
- 2.3. Work on finding solutions to national and regional Aarhus Convention-related issues

Success Indicators:	Indicator Verification:
The Network is the independent organiser of educational seminars for various target groups	Seminar agendas, lists of participants, evaluation of seminars

The Network is the independent publisher of Aarhus Convention implementation publications	Publications
Number of submitted and adopted comments on laws and policies	Network records
Number of independently prepared proposals of regulations/decisions	Text of proposals
Members of the BiH Aarhus Centres Network invited to participate in meetings organized by the Aarhus Convention Secretariat and AC Annual Meeting of the OSCE	Correspondence with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat Correspondence with the OSCE Mission to BiH
Increased number of Network comments on working group documents	Minutes of meetings
Number of independent campaigns, projects, initiatives	Network documents
Lack of funds present no risk to Network activity	Network documents
Concrete changes to institutions' work (procedures)	Decisions of institutions
Number of regional educational and information-sharing meetings	Minutes of meetings

9. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The implementation of the Strategic Plan will be monitored through collection and analysis annual reports to be shared among members at least 15 days before the annual meeting of the BiH network. Reports will be sent for comment to the **Advisory Board** of the Aarhus Centres Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their final versions will be published on our joint Internet site. Evaluation of results will be conducted for each individual strategic goal.

The progress of implementation of the Strategic Framework will be monitored at the level of Aarhus Centres Co-ordinators, and corrective mechanisms will be proposed for any weaknesses. The result of a self-evaluation of management conduct and services provision will serve for the purpose of a learning process and for the introduction of necessary changes.

10. RELEVANT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES

National

In absence of the Aarhus Convention Implementation Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Network members identified the following:

- 1) National Energy Strategy
- 2) National Energy and Climate Plan (to be drafted in 2019)

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- 3) Entity-level Environmental Protection Laws and Bylaws
 - 4) Entity-level Environmental Protection Strategies

EU/International

Since the establishment of the Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013, there have been several important global agreements that are strategically relevant to its work:

- 1) Strategic Plan of the Aarhus Convention Secretariat 2015-2020
- 2) Agenda 2030
- 3) Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)
- 4) Paris Climate Agreement
- 5) EU Western Balkans Strategy
- 6) RCC SEE 2020 Strategy

Strategic Plan of the Aarhus Convention Secretariat³ (2015-2020) identifies several key focus areas, such as: full implementation of the Convention by each signatory, Expansion into new Member States, development of AC Provisions so that the Convention continues to achieve its objectives.

Agenda 2030⁴

Aarhus Centres network contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals and related targets; however targets associated with SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions are intrinsic to the mandate of the Aarhus Centres:

- a. Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all;
- b. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels;
- c. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels;
- d. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements;
- e. Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

³https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop5/Documents/Post_session_docs/Decision_excerpts_in_English/Decision_V_5_on_the_Strategic_Plan_for_2015%E2%80%932020.pdf

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction⁵

There are many relevant linkages between the Aarhus Convention and the Sendai Framework, the first of which being that information about the status of the environment encompasses information related to natural hazards. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) recognizes that: "Effective DRR is only possible as long as the public has timely access to adequate information on the potential risks of and actions for mitigating disasters; if they can effectively participate in decision-making on proposed disaster risk reduction projects, plans and laws; and if those responsible can be held accountable for all matters related to potential and past disasters."

Paris Climate Agreement⁶

The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Agreement's provisions concerning climate change education, training as well as public awareness, participation and access to information, are directly related to the Aarhus Centres' work. An important imperative is transparency in disclosing of mitigation measures and plans by signatories.

EU Western Balkans Strategy⁷

The European Union's officially adopted Strategy for the Western Balkans in February 2018 notes that: much remains to be done across the board to align with the EU's *acquis*, to establish or build up the related institutions, and to ensure implementation capacity, whether in terms of single market rules, social policy, energy and transport *acquis* or EU environmental law. This is an important entry point for Aarhus Centres which have already contributed to the questionnaire process by providing information for answers to questions under Chapters 14 (Transport), 15 (Energy) and 27 (Environment).

SEE 2020 Agenda⁸

⁵ <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

⁶ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf

⁸ <https://www.rcc.int/files/user/docs/reports/SEE2020-Strategy.pdf>

The Agenda, brokered by the Regional Cooperation Council, discusses specific targets related to environmental cooperation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia concerning climate change adaptation and related awareness raising and education, as well as transboundary water resources management and Regional Integral Water Management Framework Agreement. With other Aarhus Centres operating in Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, BiH network could be a relevant stakeholder in capacity-building and public education activities.