



THE PATH TO **SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT** IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

BACKGROUND

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a pressing waste management crisis that poses grave risks to both the environment and public health. The country's inadequate waste management system is characterized by poorly managed toxic waste, underdeveloped and overflowing landfills, and an alarming proliferation of illegal dumpsites. In Sarajevo Canton alone, citizens dispose of an average of 1.25 kg of waste per day, contributing to the annual generation of approximately 1.2 million tons of municipal solid waste in the country.

The waste collection and disposal rates in Bosnia and Herzegovina are disconcertingly low. Sarajevo Canton manages to collect only 23% of the waste generated at the national level annually, while the national figure is slightly better but still alarming, with only 35% of MSW being collected. A mere 12% of the collected waste is appropriately disposed of in controlled landfills, while the majority, 65%, ends up in uncontrolled dumpsites, creating significant environmental hazards and health risks.

Recycling efforts in the country are severely lacking, with only 3.3% of the total municipal solid waste generated being recycled. The potential for waste reduction through recycling is substantial, as separating recyclable waste could lead to a daily reduction of 250 tons of municipal waste. Comparatively, the European Union's average waste/recycling capacity stands at 38%, highlighting Bosnia and Herzegovina's stark contrast with a meager 10% recycling capacity.

QUICK FACTS



2.1 million tCO₂e*
was produced in
2021 from recyclable
solid waste in
Sarajevo



1,716 tCO₂e
was reduced in
2021 by recycling
4-5 tons/day



165,000 tCO₂e
could be reduced
annually by recycling
80 tons/day



5-6.5% CO₂e
could be
avoided by
recycling

* tCO₂e - tonnes in carbon dioxide equivalent

Citation: World Bank and Government of Sweden (2018) 'Municipal Solid Waste Management Sector Review Strategic Directions and Investment Planning up to 2025'.



PIN AND CZDA'S APPROACH

The collaboration between People in Need (PIN) and the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) has been instrumental in driving positive change and development in BiH. Both organizations share a common focus on promoting sustainable development, fostering social cohesion, and advancing the adoption of a circular economy in the country.

A prime example of their joint efforts is the "Efficient Waste Management System Project" in Sarajevo Canton. Implemented by PIN in partnership with KJKP RAD and Dekonta, the project has made a profound impact on waste management. With over 275 green islands installed throughout the region, serving around 500,000 citizens, the project, funded by the Government of the Czech Republic, has delivered 770 containers, 4,800 bins, 1,848 composters for organic waste, and equipment for a recycling yard. These initiatives are aimed at promoting separate recycling waste collection and establishing a more efficient and sustainable waste management system in Sarajevo Canton.

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Support scale-up of existing waste management and recycling efforts. Communities, particularly in Sarajevo Canton, are becoming more aware of the new and existing capacities for recycling. Continued investments are needed to maintain and build upon the momentum created by PIN and CzDA.
- Policymakers must impose stringent regulations on the private sector to ensure responsible waste management, and incentivize practices that mitigate waste production by considering the entire life cycle of their products. Whether it's plastics, hazardous materials, or other types of waste, private companies should have long-term plans to manage it.
- Empowering communities through robust and transparent waste monitoring systems is vital, allowing locals and civil society to flag illegal waste sites and actively participate in preserving their environment.
- In the medium and long-term, we must accelerate our transition towards a circular economy. This can't be the will of citizens alone. Governments and the private sector must step-up. The EU's Waste Policy and the EU Green Deal provide us with roadmaps on how we can get there.



If we want the best for our children, we can think about changing our habits, to leave them a better world. And secondly, let's teach them not to do additional harm.

*- Arijana Mangafić-Aćimović
a resident of Sarajevo Canton*