

# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina January 2017

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES TO PREVENT CHRONIC DISEASES



Chronic diseases are the main cause of death and disability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to a large extent influenced by unhealthy lifestyles. The Reducing Health Risk Factors in BiH project aims to improve the health of BiH's population, by focusing on reduction of chronic diseases, primarily cardiovascular diseases, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Chronic diseases are caused by wide-spread risk factors among the population. The most often among the risk factors are physical inactivity, followed by overweight, smoking, and alcohol consumption. Considering chronic diseases are influenced by unhealthy lifestyles it means they can be prevented by simply changing behaviours to healthy ones and with preventive public health measures. Focusing primary health care systems in the country on disease prevention and health promotion would bring benefits for the population and the country's overall development, but this requires long-term perspective.

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### MULTI-ACTION APPROACH TO REDUCE HEALTH RISK FACTORS

The project encompasses several approaches: from development of regulatory frameworks, to promoting healthy lifestyles and educating family medicine teams. The end goal is to encourage and support BiH's citizens to adjust their lifestyles in order to reduce their health risk factors, but also to contribute to the establishment of an effective system of public health governance.

In order to reduce the behavioural risks factors of the population it is necessary to develop framework policies in the area of tobacco control, alcohol consumption, dietary, salt-, sugar-, and fats-intake regulation. These are complemented by activities on raising public awareness on the consequences of unhealthy lifestyles. Civil society organizations, the media, the private sector and municipalities will advocate and implement health policies to contribute to creation of healthy environments and lifestyles. In addition, family medicine teams will be trained on introducing effective preventive services to their patients, especially to high-risk individuals.

Considering that changing behaviours to healthy lifestyles requires full social mobilization, the scope of this project encompasses support to several groups country-wide, all with the power to contribute to reducing health risk factors in BiH. The project will directly work with 4,500 family medicine doctors and nurses, as well as public health institutions. It is estimated that 60% of citizens of BiH will benefit from the new health care services, raised health literacy, and reduced risks of chronic diseases. Special focus will be placed on reaching disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, as well as youth, who will be able to adopt healthy lifestyles in early adolescence.



### HEALTH AUTHORITIES STRONGLY COMMITTED TO CHANGE

Ministries of Health of both entities individually requested support from all major health sector donors in BiH to put forward the improvement of the public health area. As a response to the request, the Swiss Embassy in BiH took the initiative in bringing together the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the World Health Organization, and the World Bank. In close cooperation with the BiH's health authorities the project and the action plan were developed. Through this process, entity Ministries of Health have shown strong commitment in strengthening the public health system.

### THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

**NAME:**  
Reducing Health Risk Factors in BiH project

**DOMAIN:**  
Health

**THEME:**  
Health

**LAND/REGION:**  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

**PARTNERS:**  
Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ministry of Health of Federation of BiH  
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska  
Other line ministries (i.e. for trade and economy, agriculture, finances, education, culture and sports, environment and tourism, local self-governance)  
Public Health Institutes (FBiH and RS)  
Agencies for Accreditation and Quality in Health (FBiH and RS)

**IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:**  
World Health Organization  
World Bank

### STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in BiH. Considering they are most often caused by unhealthy lifestyles, by changing one's behaviour these diseases could be prevented. The BiH's primary health care systems still mainly focus on treatment of diseases, while disease prevention is not sufficiently addressed.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

The aim of the project is to encourage BiH citizens to adopt healthy lifestyles, as well as to develop regulations within several areas influencing the health risk factors (such as the tobacco and alcohol industry). Within the project, family medicine doctors and nurses will be educated to provide preventive care services, especially to vulnerable groups. Special attention will be given to reaching young people and ensuring adoption of healthy lifestyles in early adolescence.

### TARGET GROUP:

4,500 family medicine teams, health authorities, civil society organizations, the media, the private sector, municipal governments

**BUDGET:**  
CHF 7'140'000

**DURATION:**  
01.12.2012 - 31.12.2018 (end of the current phase)

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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