



Strategic Report 2012

of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism

Slovak Republic
Version 1.0

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1 EXECUTION SUMMARY

This report is prepared for the period from 1 January 2012 till 31 December 2012 and after it is approved by the Monitoring Committee it will be submitted to the donor states. The report does not focus on programme administered by the company Innovation Norway (Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue).

In Slovakia, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism supports 4 programmes. 3 programmes are operated by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic.

The delay in these grants implementation is obvious and represents a great risk of the failure to achieve the set objectives. This delay is observed in all the Member States, whereas the Slovak Republic with 70% of programmes approved as at 31 December 2012 was on the seventh position among fifteen states. From the point of drawing, as at 31 December 2012 the beneficiary states were at about the same level – 0%.

Considering the final deadline for the eligibility of expenditures which is in general set to 30 April 2016, the risk of the failure to fulfil the objectives of financial mechanisms is very current.

The assessment process at the level of donor states, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein (hereinafter referred to as the “donors”) took at least 8 months in Slovakia. In some instances it has not yet been completed. The expected term of the assessment process of donors of 4 months doubled in most of the cases. It has to be noted, that the 4-month term starts to run only after the delivery of all the information the donor states consider needed for the programme approval. From this point all the terms were complied with.

A positive thing is that in November 2012 the programme agreements were signed for 2 programmes and their actual implementation may start in 2013. These programmes were SK07 Green Industry Innovation, SK07 Domestic and Gender – Based Violence.

2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The impacts at the national level cannot be assessed at present, because the actual implementation has not yet commenced. Because of that this report focuses on expected impacts and the assessment of potential risks. The National Focal Point contacted independent experts and provided them with the texts of the programmes and asked them to prepare recommendations, to identify potential risks, to assess the way the conditions changed after almost a year after draft programmes submitting and to propose potential improvements. For majority of programmes the assessments were mainly positive.

2.1 Cohesion

Cohesion is one of two basic objectives of the Norway Grants including the removal of economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area. Results-based management requires metering based on objectively verifiable indicators. The assessment of these indicators will provide the possibility to monitor whether Slovakia approaches the average values within the EEA or not in the course of the programme period. Several indicators are not monitored at the supranational level, however, the analysis of data from national resources may be used to postulate whether the situation in Slovakia in this respect is improving or not. A special category is cross-sectional criteria with which it is complicated, save some exceptions, to quantify the benefit of such grants. In the present and following chapters we will describe at least quality changes of certain parameters.

The report defines indicators that will be monitored during the programme period. These are the indicators relevant for individual programmes, i.e. the report does not focus on indicators that will not be influenced by the programmes implemented in the Slovak Republic. The indicators that cannot be statistically verified will not be monitored, too. The list may be completed from time to time. The objective of the strategic report in this part is not to meter the programme contribution to such indicators. This contribution cannot be quantified from the point of the Norway grants allocation and operation. The objective of this report is to analyse the social changes and trends in programme areas. However, we can expect at the same time that if positive changes occur it will be so also with the contribution of the Norway grants.

During the whole implementation period the indicators will be watched in the following areas:

Priority sector	Relevant programmes	Indicators
Green industry innovations	Green industry innovations	Share of renewable energy resources on final energy consumption in the EEA Unemployment rate in the EEA
Human and social development	Domestic and gender-based violence	Number of women victims of the crime of torturing a close person or a person in ward

	Cross-border cooperation with Ukraine	Visas granted by Slovak Consular Offices in Ukraine ¹
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2.1.1 Green Industry Innovations

Using renewable energy resources at energy generation

High dependence of Slovakia on fossil fuels makes space for the use of renewable energy resources, mainly biomass, to increase the energy security. It is proved that the use of renewable energy resources as domestic energy resources to certain extent increases the security and partial diversification of energy supplies. It at the same time decreases the dependence of the economy on instable oil and natural gas prices. Their use is based on developed and environmentally friendly technologies and contributes to greenhouse gases and harmful substances decrease.

The bearing topic of the Green Industry Innovations is environmental use of organic waste and production of biomass from areas not used by agriculture at green energy generation. The use of innovative green technology for building an environmentally friendly energy resource of regional meaning together with the synergic effect of using the waste from agricultural production, producing biomass from areas not used by agriculture and bio-degradable component of communal and industrial waste alleviate the negative impact of the energy sector on the environment, improve competitiveness of green business and contribute to the creation of green jobs.

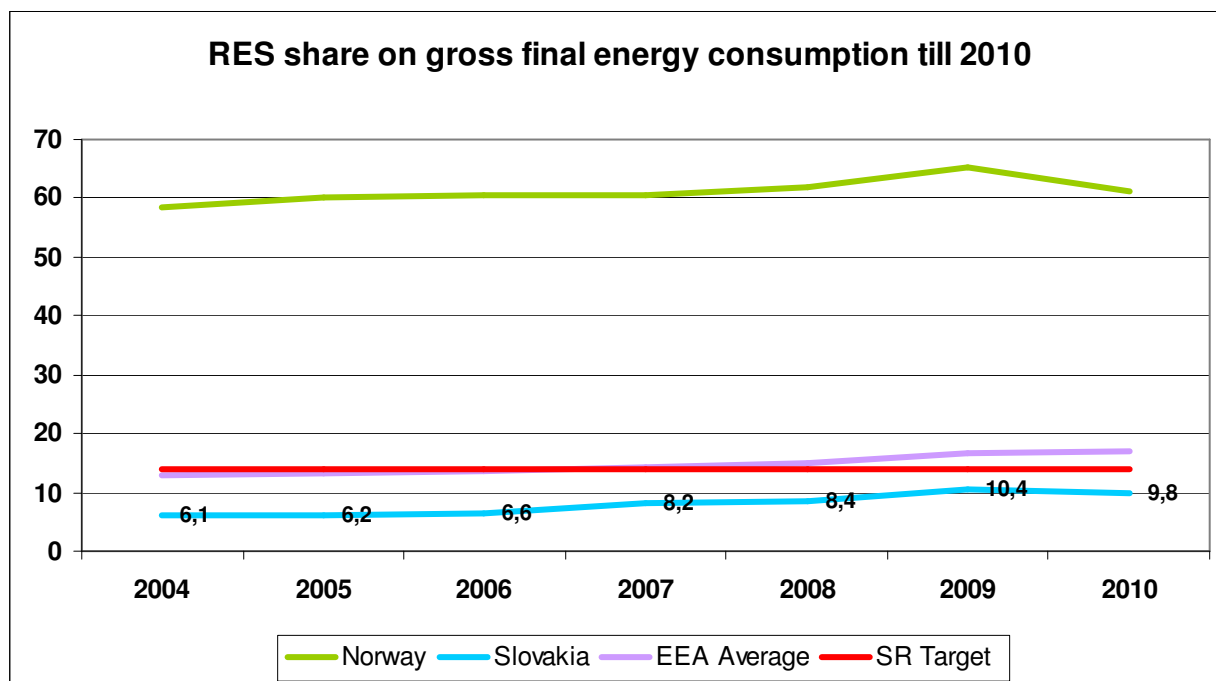
Statistics

In the area of energy consumption the National Reform Programme imposes a liability to the SR to increase the share of renewable energy resources on final gross energy consumption to 14% till 2020. This objective has been set in line with the Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable resources. In compliance with this Directive in October 2010 the Slovak Government approved the National Action Plan for Renewable Energy. The Action Plan identifies reserves in the use of biomass use as a valuable energy alternative to fossil fuels and requires more extensive use of biomass not only for heat generation where its use has improved in recent years, but also as a source suitable for energy generation. It means that the Programme may contribute to the fulfilment of the Directive 2004/8/EC on the promotion of cogeneration based on a useful heat demand in the internal energy market and amending the Directive 92/62/EEC (so-called combined generation of electricity and heat /CHP- directives/). According to the data provided by the Ministry of Economy of the SR the share of renewable energy resources on the final gross energy consumption was at the level of 11%. However, the data was not officially published by EUROSTAT, not even for 2011.

¹ http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocenky/rok_2012/2012-rocenka-UHCP-SK.pdf

If the data for 2012 is correct, Slovakia is getting significantly closer to the set objective. Experts agree that the objective of 14% should be definitely achieved by Slovakia in 2020.

Chart 1: Share of renewable energy resources on final gross energy consumption in the EEA²



Unemployment

The Slovak Republic is the state with one of the highest unemployment rates among the EU countries. For sure, the Green Industry Innovation programme will not resolve Slovakia's problems with unemployment. On the other hand it creates jobs in the most affected industries. According to the data provided by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic in the period from the 1st till the 3rd quarter of 2011 the biggest number of unemployed according to their recent previous employment were registered in industry and agriculture and forestry and transport and storing ranked as the 6th or 7th respectively. The programme proposed will comprise investments to industry in the area of energy commodities production, investments to logistic centres determined for biomass transport and storing and investments to agriculture for biomass production.

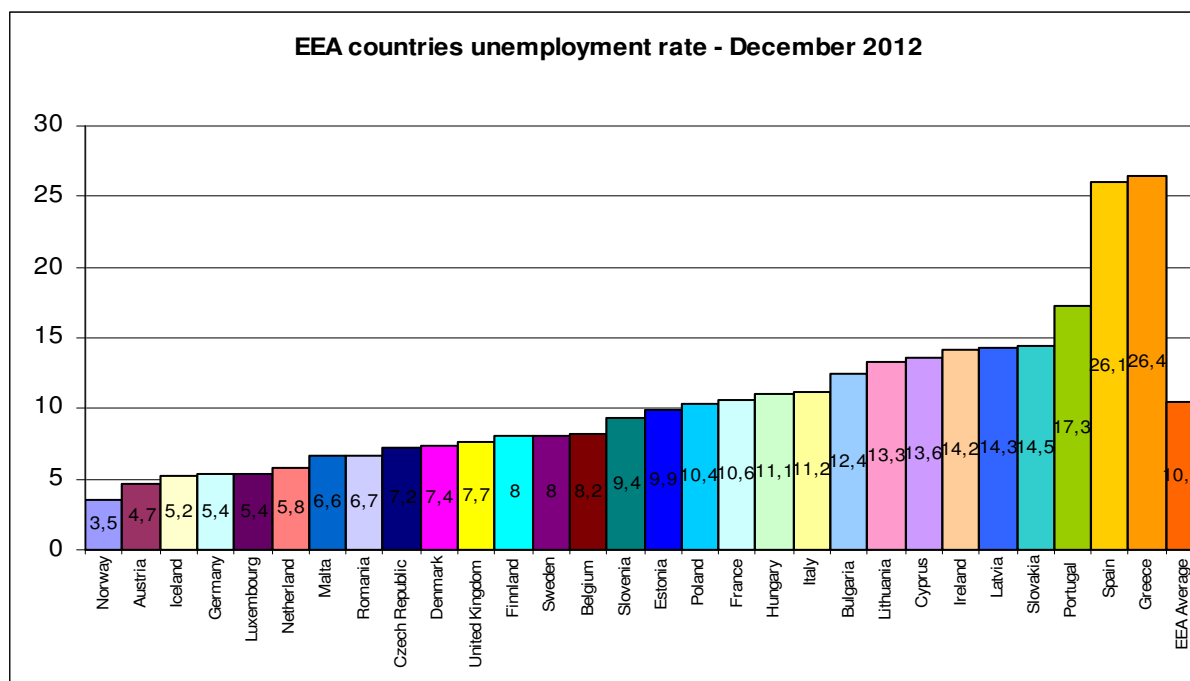
Statistics

The above chart shows that unemployment is the problem not only in Slovakia, but in the EEA as such. In the European Economic Area, the average unemployment rate i.e.

² Prepared according to the data provided by EUROSTAT

the unemployment rate calculated as the arithmetic average of unemployment in the individual EEA countries was 10.5%³ by the end of 2012.

Chart 2: Unemployment rate in the EEA countries in December 2012⁴



2.1.2 Cross-border cooperation with Ukraine

The programme of Cross-border cooperation with Ukraine is geographically oriented at two regions on the territory of Slovakia - Košice and Prešov Self-governing Regions and Transcarpatia Region on the Ukrainian side. The development of target regions has been lagging behind other regions of Slovakia and of the EU for long. Elimination of this difference is very slow - at the current growth rates the economy of Eastern Slovakia would only reach the EU level in 2111, of Prešov Region only in 2259.

The Transcarpatia Region – the border region on the Ukrainian side is in a similar position. In spite of the economic growth in 2001 – 2007, several social and economic areas in the area have deteriorated since 2008 due to the world financial and economic crisis. (Olha Yehorova: Social and Economic Situation and Regional Development of Transcarpatia Region on Nationwide Level). The GDP of all these three regions is below 30% of the EU average.

The programme has not yet been approved by donors, so it would be premature to focus on its potential impacts and consequences. However, the National Focal Point believes that the programme's success may only be guaranteed by the fulfilment of two conditions –

³ Except for Switzerland and Lichtenstein that are not included in the calculation.

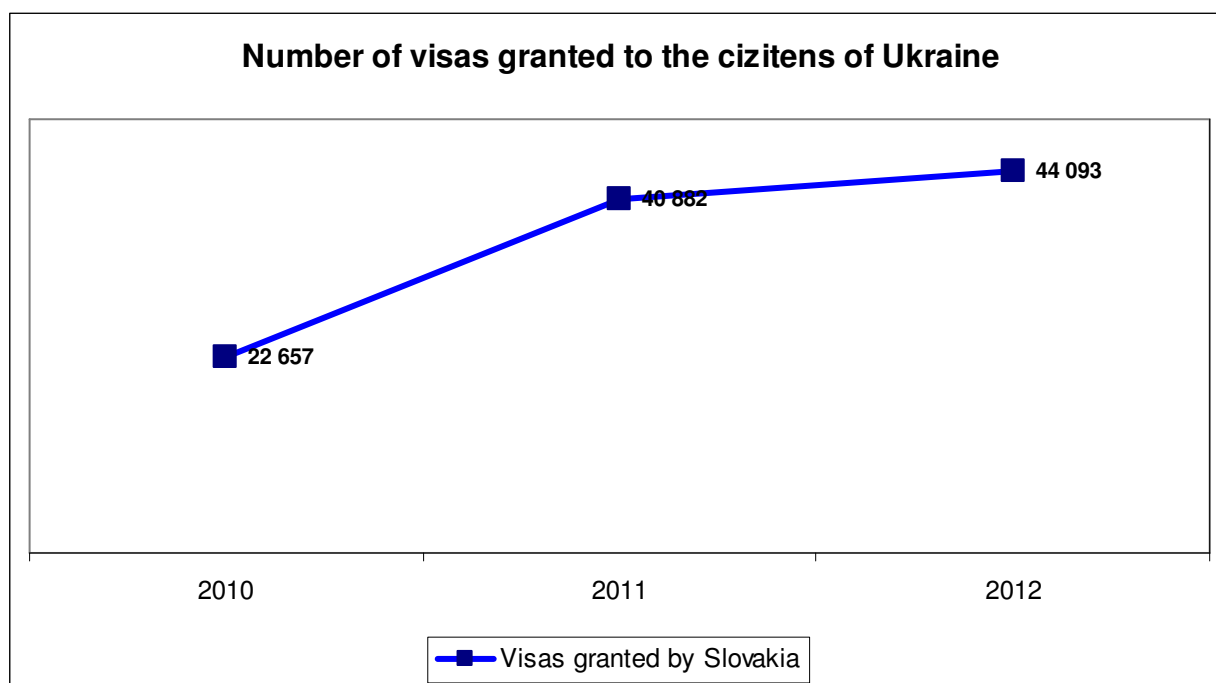
⁴ Prepared according to the data provided by EUROSTAT

removal of the part of administrative load relating to the visa obligation and reduction of the waiting period on border crossings between Slovakia and Ukraine.

Statistics

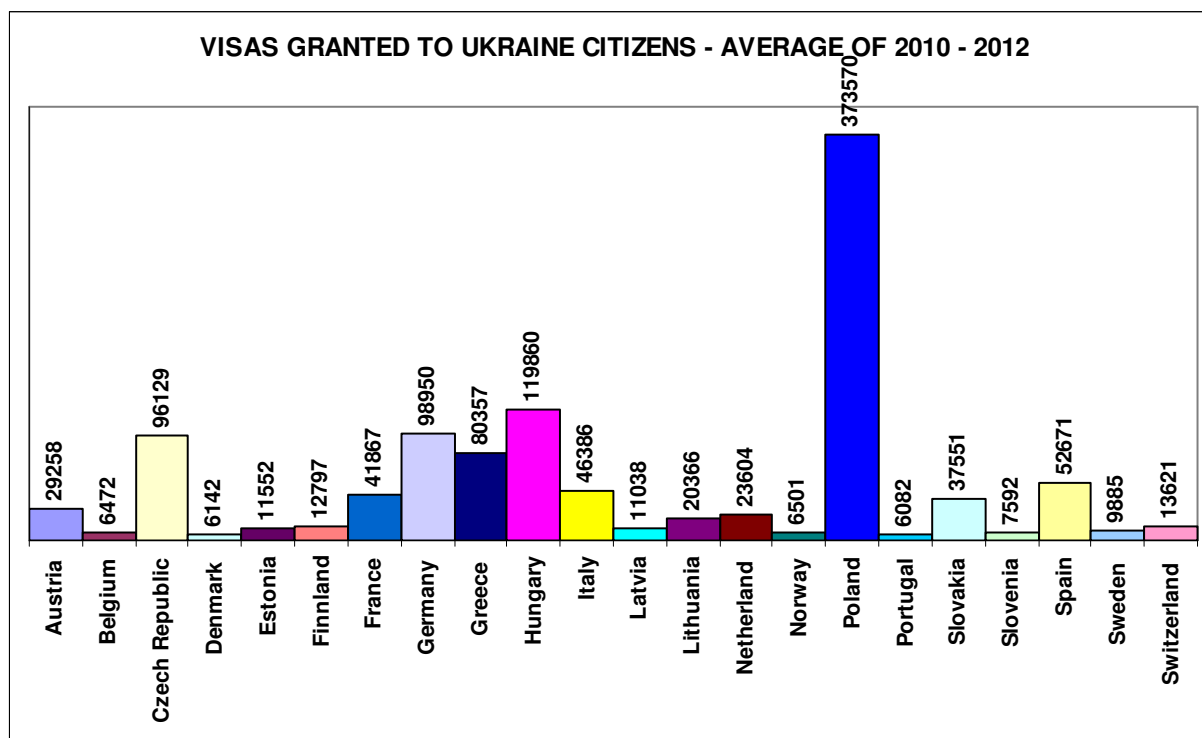
In 2012, the consular offices of the SR granted 44,093 visas in total to Ukrainian citizens. We did not have the data before 2010 at our disposal, so it is complicated to monitor the visas trend. However, the access of the SR into the Schengen Area after 2008 has had such a major impact, that any older data would not have the required informative value most probably.

Chart 3: Number of visas granted by consular offices of the SR and Hungary to Ukraine citizens⁵



⁵ Prepared according to the data from the statistical almanacs of the Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Police Presidium <http://www.minv.sk/?polrok-2012>

Chart 4: Number of visas granted to Ukraine citizens by the Schengen Area countries – average for 2010 – 2012⁶



The quantity of visas granted to Ukrainians is growing in Slovakia. In the rank of the Schengen Area Countries Slovakia ranked on the 9th position among 23 countries in the quantity of visas granted to Ukrainians between 2010 and 2012. It is good that compared to 2010 the quantity of visas granted doubled in 2012.

2.1.3 Domestic and gender-based violence

This programme with specific focus on the Roma minority is a smaller one among the programmes supported in the programme period 2009 – 2014. It is the only programme which may systematically solve major part of its agenda in Slovakia. The resources for combating domestic and gender-based violence have never been so concentrated. The programme setting was for this reason very important not only from the point of the National Focal Point, but also from the point of whole Slovakia.

All the relevant institutions in Slovakia have been involved in the programme preparation and their comments have been reflected to a great extent. Slovakia has a great potential in this area which is mainly represented by capacity and expert level of non-governmental organisations. A great promise is the creation of coordination and methodology centre which

⁶ Prepared according to the data from DG Domestic Affairs, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/domestic-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm, data for the visa A, C and visa with limited territorial validity (LTV).

should be the main engine in the upcoming years in promoting legislation and methodology changes in the area of combating domestic and gender-based violence. The component of safe women homes and direct support of advisory centres together with this national centre should form the catching network for the victims of violence, they should significantly increase revealing of violence prevalence and help the victims to return back to life. All centres should provide complex services and regional availability of these services should be provided for. The programme expects that by the end of its implementation formalised partnerships of several services providers will be created which will lead to the actual formation of networks.

A major factor of combating the domestic and gender-based violence is also reducing the rate of domestic and gender-based violence latency. In Slovakia, similarly to other countries, there is a significant number of cases when the crime of violence is not reported to the relevant bodies at all.

However, in the area of domestic violence Slovakia misses prevalence data about violence against children. The general and in-depth research similar to the one made among women in 2008 would contribute to the solution of the issue of violence against children. Non-governmental organisations estimate that in Slovakia more than 100,000 children are abused.⁷

Statistics

Only 18% of torture victims and 25% of sexual violence victims turned to the Police in 2012. The former latency estimates (rate of actual prevalence with regard to the registered criminality) confirm tenfold of sexual offences and 15-times the amount of torture crimes that have never get to the Police.⁸ The Police statistics of registered crime corresponds to this.

In 2011, there were 245 women who were the victims of the crime of torturing a close person or a person in ward registered in Slovakia.

Chart: Number of women as the victims of the crime of torturing a close person or a person in ward⁹

⁷ Data and citation come from that the opinion the National Focal Point procured

⁸Holubová, Barbora; 2012:Správa o násilí páchanom na ženách na Slovensku za rok 2011 (*Report on Violence against Women in Slovakia in 2011*). Bratislava, IVPR, 131 pgs.; dostupné na:

http://www.sspr.gov.sk/IVPR/images/IVPR/vyskum/2012/Holubova/2261_holubova_sprava.pdf

⁹



2.2 Bilateral relations

Among ten programmes implemented in the Slovak Republic 8 are implemented in partnership with the programme's donor partner. The idea to cover the costs from the allocation determined for donors has removed potential issues linked to the public procurement and state assistance aid. From this point we can see the decision of donors and the Slovak Republic to participate in the partner donor partner programmes in almost all programmes only positively.

Slovakia makes efforts for partnership also at the project level. The programme's donor partners will be asked to prepare a list of potential project partners from donor states. The list should always be published together with the appeal.

The support of the search for project partners in donor states and the development of this partnership and the process of the preparation of the application for the project with the donor partner is supported within the programme bilateral funds. When publishing calls for submitting of projects on programme websites the programme operators will also publish notifications about opening a bilateral fund of the programme.

Area	Relevant programmes	Indicators
Commerce	Green Industry Innovations	DFI of Norway in the SR ¹⁰
Student mobility	EEA Scholarship Programme	Number of Norwegian students studying in the SR – full-time study

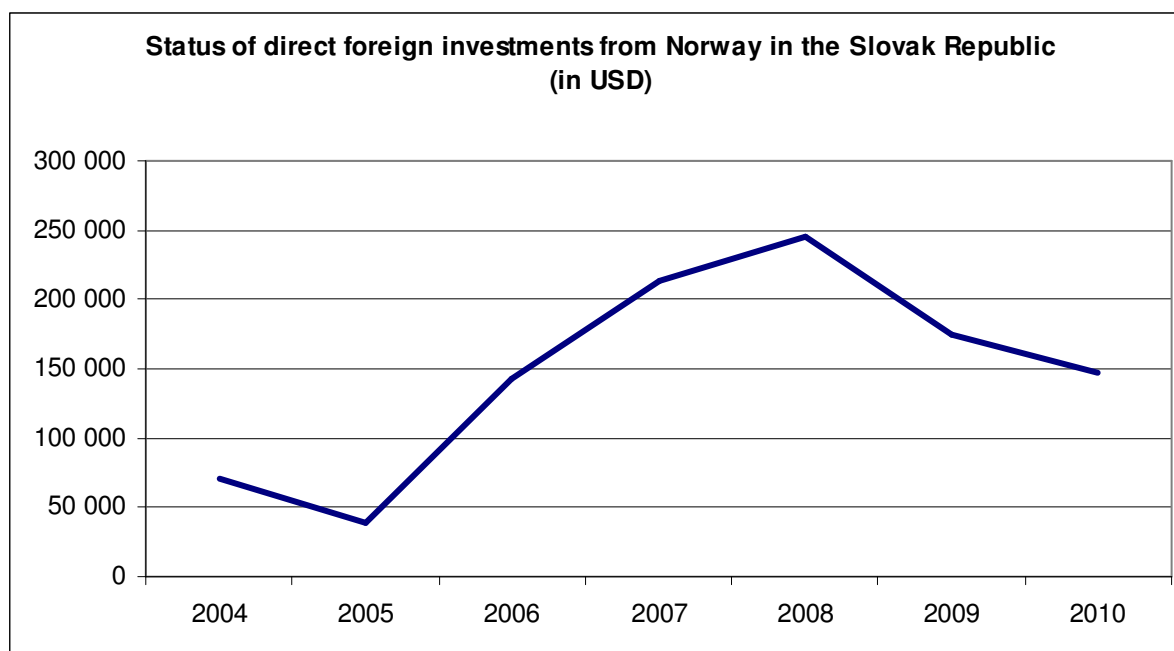
¹⁰ <http://www.nbs.sk/sk/statisticke-udaje/statistika-platobnej-bilancie/priame-zahranicne-investicie>

2.2.1 Commerce

From the point of the National Focal Point it can be stated that the relations of the SR can be metered mainly by economic indicators among which the most appropriate is the status of direct foreign investments (hereinafter referred to as the “DFI”) from Norway in the SR. According to the data published by the National Bank of Slovakia the decrease of the DFI of Norway in the SR was recorded in the period between 2008 and 2010. The opposite flow, i.e. the status of the DFI from Slovakia in Norway was not statistically assessed. Inclusion of donor partners in individual programmes may reverse this trend.

Statistics

Chart 6: Status of direct foreign investments from Norway in the Slovak Republic¹¹



2.2.2 Student mobility

Both in the former and in this period, the EEA grants finance the student mobility. Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein have limited potential to receive foreign students. In spite of that these grants were very popular in former period. The Norwegian students like studying in Slovakia which is also proved e.g. by 300 Norwegian students studying medicine in Martin. This trend should also be supported by the Scholarship Fund. The National Focal Point would appreciate if the Scholarship Fund could work synergically with other programmes of the EEA and Norway Grants, e.g. by privileging schools with the curriculum focus close to other

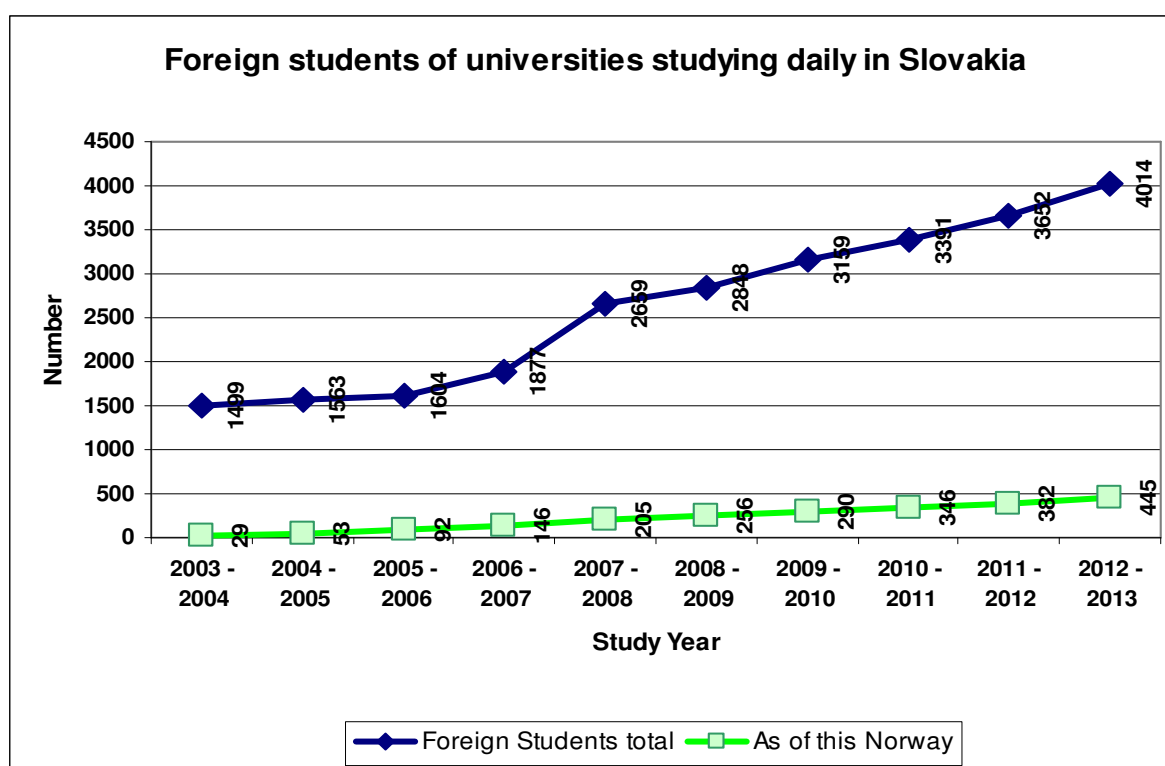
¹¹ Prepared according to the data from the National Bank of Slovakia <http://www.nbs.sk/sk/statisticke-udaje/statistika-platobnej-bilancie/priame-zahranicne-investicie>

programmes financed from these grants. However, the National Focal Point respects absolute autonomy of the Scholarship Fund Operator and this is only a recommendation made by the National Focal Point.

Statistics

From 2003-2004 the quantity of foreign students studying in the SR has more than tripled. For comparison, more than 37,000¹² students studied in the neighbouring Czech Republic in 2010 – 2011. More than a half, exactly more than 24,000 of them were from Slovakia. The total quantity of Slovak students studying in abroad is not statistically assessed according to the information at our disposal.

Chart 7: Overview of the quantity of foreign students studying in Slovakia on a full-time basis



2.2.3 Assessment of bilateral relations

The National Focal Point could monitor the inclusion of the donor programme donor partners in the creation of programme proposals. We can state that there were problems in the beginning in some instances caused by the fact that the whole partnership system on the programme level was new and the competences of individual institutions were not fully clear. However, these initial issues were quickly resolved and the donor programme donor partners enriched the programmes by expertise and know-how from other cultures and countries.

¹² Source: Statistical Almanac of Education 2010, <http://www.msmt.cz/file/21814>

Because no projects have been implemented so far, not even projects with the donor partner, the National Focal Point asked all the donor partners for the assessment of cooperation. Their standpoints are attached to this Report.

2.3 Horizontal questions

The EEA and Norway Grants considered as horizontal priorities mainly the following cross-sectional cutting issues:

1. Democracy, good administration/governance
2. Human rights and minorities
3. Vulnerable groups, e.g. Roma minority
4. Combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia
5. Combating poverty and social exclusion
6. Gender equality, gender-conditioned violence
7. Combating hate speech

In this part the Strategic Report focuses on combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia, gender equality and gender-based violence and combating hate speech. Considering the content of the programme areas the contribution from Norwegian Grants is irrelevant to other horizontal issues. However, after the approval of cross-border cooperation programme other horizontal issues may be included in the strategic reports for the upcoming years.

2.3.1 Combating extremism, gender-based violence

The Strategy of Combating Extremism for 2011 – 2014 (submitted by the Ministry of Interior of the SR) was adopted in 2012. It conceptually elaborates various types of extremism (right-wing extremism at sports sites, on the Internet, music scene; left-wing oriented, religion-oriented, etc.) and maps their expressions in Slovakia. The objective of a new concept is (a) creating an efficient system of measures and activities focusing on the protection of citizens and society against antisocial acts of extremist individuals, groups and movements; (b) elimination of causes, expressions and consequences of extremism and race-motivated crime. The concept also sets activities and duties to achieve 6 framework objectives.

A related document approved by the beginning of 2013 by the Slovak Government is the Concept of Combating Spectators Violence for 2012 – 2015. The main objective is gradual elimination of spectator crime at all levels; partial objectives include: (a) Amendments and supplements to legal mechanisms; (b) Protection against spectator violence; (c) Systematic and life-long education; (d) Improving the legal awareness and informing of public; (e) Implementation of liabilities arising from international covenants and treaties in the area of spectator violence.¹³

From September 2011 a new crime of stalking has been included (Section 360A) in the Catch IX. of the Criminal Code No. 300/2005 Coll. Its wording was adopted by the former

¹³ Available on: <https://lt.justice.gov.sk/Attachment/vlastnymat.rtf>

Government. The stalking crime is often a part of partner violence, when even after a divorce/split-up of partners stalking, terrorisation and other efforts for keeping the control do not cease and a woman is still assaulted. From the beginning of 2012 till October 2012 the Police revealed 105 stalking cases, including 62 investigated.¹⁴ Stopping stalking may significantly help to prevent the escalation of gender-based violence with terminal consequences.

In February 2013, the Slovak Government approved the amendment to the law on compensation to persons injured by violent crimes. The victims of rape, sexual violence or abuse should have it clearly guaranteed by law that on one hand they are entitled for a compensation of potential physical harm and on the other hand to the compensation for the moral loss.

In September 2012 a set of fundamental rights for all the victims of crime in the EU was approved in the EU. All the victims of crime in the EU will have equal fundamental rights and their specific needs will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This will happen according to the directive approved by the European Parliament. According to the new rules, the Member States will be obliged to provide the victims and their relatives with the access to free and confidential support services e.g. help of a psychologist, namely from the moment of crime reporting, during investigation and legal trial and after its completion regardless of the fact where the crime was committed. The victims with specific needs such as e.g. gender-based violence victims or children will be provided with support services by specifically trained experts. After the directive approval by the Council the Member States will have three years to transpose it to the national legal system. The set of fundamental rights is coordinated with the principles and rules stipulated in the *EC Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*.

2.3.2 Combating hate speech

Hate speech is a global issue and to a significant scope it relates to the development of the Internet, Internet discussions and social networks. Media do not avoid it, too. Hate speech in Slovakia is directed against many groups. The subject-matter of the hate speech is generalisation and acknowledging the principle of collective fault. The National Focal Point has been involved in the initiative of the EEA Grants and on its website it has published information about the campaign of the European Council in combating the hate speech in Europe¹⁵.

3 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Management and control system

¹⁴Statistics of crime provided by the Ministry of Interior of the SR.

¹⁵www.eeagrants.sk, www.norwaygrants.sk

The management and control system in the Slovak Republic is centralised and unified for all the programmes operated by the programme operators appointed by the National Focal Point. The objective of centralisation and unification is to eliminate the pending risk of not drawing the funds assigned to the Slovak Republic.

The management and control system of the National Focal Point was audited by the auditing body. The audit was completed in 2011, whereas in 2012 the National Focal Point presented an updated version of the Detailed Description of Management and Control System. It was approved by donors on 10 August 2012.

3.2 Compliance with legal regulations

All the management documents and approved programmes were prepared in compliance with the legal regulations of the EU, domestic legal regulations and the Memorandum of Understanding. No specific issues have occurred so far.

3.3 Status of programmes

3.3.1 SK07: Green Industry Innovation

Programme area:	Green Industry Innovation
Programme Operator:	National Focal Point – the Government Office
DPP:	Innovation Norway
Allocation from the NFM:	EUR 14,628,000
State budget co-financing:	EUR 2,581,412
Programme performance status:	Announcing of call for submitting the project applications

The objective of the programme is to increase the competitiveness of green enterprises, including greening of existing industries, green innovation and green entrepreneurship.. The bearing topic of the Green Industry Innovations is environmental use of organic waste and production of biomass from areas not used by agriculture at green energy generation. The use of innovative green technology for building an environmentally friendly energy resource of regional meaning together with the synergic effect of using the waste from agricultural production, producing biomass from areas not used by agriculture and bio-degradable component of communal and industrial waste alleviate the negative impact of the energy sector on the environment, improve competitiveness of green business and contribute to the creation of green jobs. The programme should at the same time bridge the research with the market application of its outcomes.

In the process of the programme preparation and its implementation the Programme Operator has been closely cooperating with the Slovak Environmental Agency, Ministry of

Economy of the SR, Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency and the Agricultural Technical and Testing Institute. However, these institutions do not participate formally as the programme partners. The cooperation was taking place mainly at the level of individual experts providing consulting and proposals on an ad hoc basis and according to the requirements of the Programme Operator.

By the beginning of 2013 the Programme Operator in cooperation with experts participating at the programme preparation set the selection criteria for the selection of projects approved by the Cooperation Committee. The Programme Operator also appointed an independent expert to prepare a study about the programme focusing on strategic assessment of the programme relevance, development of the related legislation from programme submitting for the assessment by donors up to present and the progress in the area of biomass processing in the relevant period and last but not least the assessment of the appropriateness of proposed indicators setting and quantification. The outcome of the study is the conclusion that the programme “Green Industry Innovation” is a relevant financial mechanism linking agriculture, services and energy generation into one compact whole within which it will be possible to create jobs for the preparation of raw materials for logistic centres, innovative technologies and processes to prepare fuel and provide for its optimum distribution to electricity and heat generators or processors of biomass and products from it. The programme will also contribute to the fulfilment of Europe 2020 objectives and the national objectives of the SR in the area of employment and use of renewable energy resources.

Work plan 2013

- Q1: Preparation of the text of call and its attachments
 - Cooperation Committee meeting (per rollam)
 - Preparing the Study of the programme by an independent expert
 - Call announcement
 - Publishing the announcement about opening the measure A within the bilateral fund
- Q2: Launching conference for the programme and match-making seminar for the programme
 - Opening the measure A for bilateral fund of the programme
 - Programme information days – regional seminars
 - Creating the programme profile on social networks
 - Receiving and approving applications for a contribution from the bilateral fund
 - Receiving the applications for a project
- Q3: Closing of open call
 - Assessment of applications submitted within open call
 - Concluding of project contracts
- Q4: Starting the projects implementation
 - Opening of measure B for the bilateral fund of the programme

3.3.2 SK08: Cross-border Cooperation

Programme area	Cross-border Cooperation
Programme Operator	National Focal Point – Government Office
DPP:	The Norwegian Barents Secretariat
Allocation from the NFM:	EUR 12,720,000
State budget co-financing:	EUR 1,908,000
Cooperation Committee meeting	13/2/2012
Programme progress:	The programme agreement is in the final phase for approval and signing

The objective of the programme Cross-border Cooperation with Ukraine is strengthened cross-border cooperation between regions on both sides of the EU external border. The main focus of the programme is Slovak-Ukraine cooperation including a focus on supporting people-to-people contacts and exchange on lessons learnt, best practice of cross-border projects between Norway and Slovakia, as well as networking in Europe.

The programme will support projects that will contribute to the achievement of 4 programme outputs: new cross-border partnerships/networks established and existing partnerships/networks supported; exchange of know-how, best practices and experience with Norway enhanced; better conditions at the border crossings created and improvement of cross-border information flow improved; the fulfilment of which will lead to mitigation of existing barriers to cross-border cooperation.

The programme counts with the cooperation of local governments, non-governmental organisations and also private sectors on both sides of the border. It also supports and provides possibility to cooperate with organisations from Norway, which is only obligatory for one programme output, however, it will be a great benefit at the assessment of projects and its implementation, if it improves the project quality and enriching it by Norwegian know-how and experience.

The year 2012 was important from the point of programme preparation and its final form setting. In March 2012 the programme was submitted for the assessment to the Financial Mechanism Office, assessment taking several month accompanied by e-mail communication took place and after the meeting with the consulting company of the Financial Mechanism Office the Programme Operator decided in July 2012 to submit a revised programme proposal which was submitted after consulting with the DPP to the Financial Mechanism Office for the assessment at the end of August 2012. After the assessment taking several months and subsequent e-mail communication with additional information about the programme and personal meetings with the representatives of donors the programme was accepted at the beginning of 2013. The programme agreement to be signed in the 1st half of 2013 is now under preparation.

To approach and be in a closer contact with the potential applicants /regional stakeholders the possibility of delegating the powers for the small grants scheme management and implementation to Prešov or Košice Self-governing Regions is considered.

During the programme preparation and implementation the Programme Operator cooperates with the Norwegian Barents Secretariat and they meet and communicate also outside official meetings of the Cooperation Committee. The key role of the Barents Secretariat in addition to the advisory on the programme preparation and implementation is mainly the assistance and support at improving the awareness about the programme among potential partners in Norway. After signing of programme agreement the Programme Operator will closely cooperate with the donor partner at the preparation of launching conference and matchmaking events to ensure rich and quality participation of potential partners from Norway. The Norwegian Barents Secretariat assesses the working relation with the Programme Operator as a very good one and considers it to be a good starting point for the upcoming programme implementation phase. The assessment of the cooperation with the DPP and recommendations for further cooperation are attached to this Strategic Report.

As the programme is not yet in the projects implementation stage, its outcomes and outputs have not yet been fulfilled even in part.

Work plan 2013

- Q1: Assessment of the programme proposal by the donors
Meeting with the DPP in Norway
Approval of the programme proposal and programme agreement preparation
- Q2: Approval and signing of programme agreement
Cooperation Committee meeting
Launching conference for the programme
Matchmaking events
Creating a programme profile at social networks
Creating the Programme Communication Action Plan
- Q3: Preparation and launching an open call for the programme
Opening the measure A for the bilateral relations fund at programme level
Matchmaking events
Information days
Completion of calls and projects selection
- Q4: Assessment of applications submitted within open calls
Making of contracts for projects submitted within open calls
Cooperation Committee meeting

3.3.3 SK09: Domestic and Gender-based Violence

Programme area:	Domestic and Gender-based Violence
Programme Operator:	National Focal Point – Government Office
DPP:	The Norwegian Directorate of Health Council of Europe
Allocation from the NFM:	EUR 7,000,000
State budget co-financing:	EUR 1,235,294

Cooperation Committee meeting: 6/2/2012; 26/11/2012
 Programme progress: Announcing of call for submitting of project applications

The objective of the programme Domestic and Gender-based Violence is gender-based violence prevented and tackled. The main challenge in this programme area in Slovakia is institutional building of capacities of services for women at risk of and victims of violence and other victims of domestic violence (women's shelters, counselling centres), systematic approach to and coordination of all parts of assistance to the victims of violence in all regions of Slovakia, providing education for relevant branches and creation of strategies for the prevention in work with media, educational system and public.

The programme is performed by a combination of a predefined project (creation and activities of Coordinating and Methodical Centre), an open call (creation of women's shelters and support for existing counselling centres devoted to the issues of violence against women) and small grant scheme (creation of new counselling centres for providing support services to women victims of violence and support for existing centres for victims of domestic violence). Supporting of projects within this programme will result in the fulfilment of programme outcomes including gender-based violence reduced and domestic violence reduced.

Within the programme the following outputs are defined for achieving of programme outcomes :

Outcome 1 Gender-based violence reduced:

- 1) Supported existing or building of new services designed specifically for women at risk violence and experiencing violence and their children – women's shelters and counselling centres – throughout Slovakia; facilities that meet European standards, reflecting human rights approach and specific needs of target group, recognizing the woman with the accumulation of disadvantages (ethnicity, nationality, health status, age, etc.);
- 2) Established a Coordinating Methodical Centre on the national level, which will serve as a "flagship" example of good practice, and will coordinate the activities of service provision and supporting institutional on regional intervention teams level;
- 3) Trained helping professions participating in the operation of social and health services, police, courts etc. and developed methodologies, manuals for their training and education;
- 4) Methodologies and guidelines for standard procedures for work in women's crisis intervention elaborated and piloted;
- 5) Studies and statistics on violence against women methodologically supported and performed;
- 6) Media and education campaigns performed.

Output 2 Domestic violence reduced:

- 1) Studies and statistics on domestic violence methodologically supported and performed, except gender-based violence;

- 2) Supported services for victims of domestic violence with institutional strengthening to improve the quality, range and availability of services;
- 3) Elaborated methodologies and guidelines for standard procedures for work in crisis intervention and helping professions trained on the work with victims of domestic violence according to the standards.

The year 2012 was important from the point of programme preparation and its final form setting. In March 2012 the programme was submitted to the Financial Mechanism Office for the assessment, assessment taking several months which was accompanied by e-mail communication followed by the programme approval on 12 September 2012 and subsequently signing the programme agreement on 6 November 2012.

In the programme preparation process and also during its implementation the Programme Operator has been closely cooperating with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. However, this institution does not formally participate as the programme partner. The cooperation consists mainly in providing experts and consultations according to the needs and requirements.

At the beginning of 2013 the Programme Operator appointed an independent expert to prepare a study about the programme focusing on the strategic assessment of the programme relevance, development of appropriate legislation from the moment of programme submitting for the assessment by the donor till the end of 2012, and the programme progress for the relevant period and last but not least the assessment of the appropriateness of the proposed indicators setting and quantification. In the study presented the independent expert updated certain starting data about the prevalence of violence against women and administrative data from departmental filing systems. In her study she states that Monitoring of social services for women surviving violence and their children from the point of European standards performed and prepared according to the duty in the *National Action Plan for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women for 2009 – 2012* confirmed major lack of specialised and quality services for women surviving violence and that the situation in the area of domestic violence (mainly children) is similar and requires even more urgent solution. For this reason she sees the setting of the programme Domestic and Gender-based Violence as of high relevance.

During the programme preparation and implementation the Programme Operator cooperates with the donor programme partners the Norwegian Directorate of Health and the Council of Europe. The key role of the Norwegian Directorate of Health in addition to advisory at the programme preparation and implementation is mainly the assistance and support at improving the awareness about the programme among potential partners in Norway, support for bilateral relations and cooperation by donors and assistance at making of contacts of professional public on both sides. The Council of Europe is the strategic programme partner from the point of ensuring the compliance of the programme implementation with the international standards and CoE standards, in particular the CoE Convention on Preventing

and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The Programme Operator will closely cooperate with the donor partners at the approval of applications for contribution from the bilateral relations fund at programme level to provide support to applicants with genuine interest in solving the issue of domestic and gender-based violence in cooperation with the Norwegian partners. Both partners assess the cooperation withing the programme very positively, which leads to a very good working atmosphere. The assessment of the cooperation of the DPPs and recommendations for further cooperation are attached to this Strategic Report.

As the programme is not yet in the stage of projects implementation, outputs and outcomes of the programme have not yet been fulfilled even in part.

Work plan 2013

- Q1: Preparation of the 1st call for the programme and call for the bilateral relations fund at programme level
 Meeting with DPP in Norway
 Meeting of Cooperation Committee on a per rollam basis regarding the call text and selection criteria
 Launching of the 1st open call for the programme
 Opening of measure A for the bilateral relations fund at programme level
- Q2: Creating a programme profile on social networks
 Requirement to submit an application for a predefined project
 Information days
 Cooperation Committee meeting
 Call completion
 Predefined project assessment
 Making of contract for predefined project
 Launching of predefined project
- Q3: Assessment of applications submitted within calls
 Creating the Programme Communication Action Plan
- Q4: Making of contracts with project promoters
 Projects implementation launching
 Opening of measure A for the bilateral relations fund at programme level
 Conference for the programme on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
 Cooperation Committee meeting

3.3.4 Technical Assistance Fund and bilateral relations fund at national level

Year 2012

- Q1: The budget for the Technical Assistance and bilateral relations fund at the national level for the whole implementation period and the budget for the calendar year 2012 were prepared and submitted to the donors.

Q2: The Agreement of Technical Assistance and Bilateral Relations Fund at the national level was signed between the Committee of Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government Office of the Slovak Republic on 25 May 2012.

The Agreement of Drawing the Technical Assistance Fund and Bilateral Relations Fund at the National Level was signed within the EEA FM and the NFM between the Government Office of the SR and the Ministry of Finance of the SR on 22 June 2012. The first meeting of the Monitoring Committee took place on 24 May 2012.

Q3: A guideline was issued by the Head of the Office of Government of the SR about funds drawing within the Office of Government of the SR at the implementation of programme period 2009-2014 – the EEA FM and the NFM in August 2012.

The Interim Financial Report No. 1 was submitted within the TA Fund and the bilateral relations fund at the national level to the Certifying Authority in August 2012.

A detailed budget for the Technical Assistance for the calendar year 2013 was sent to the donors in September 2012.

On 25 July 2012 the donors were sent the first version of the work plan for the bilateral fund for their approval; the first comments and questions regarding the presented work plan for the BF were delivered to the NFP by donors on 30 August 2012.

On 5 September 2012 the NFP sent responses and explanations regarding the comments provided to the donors and in respect to the included comments provided by the donors it submitted the second version of the work plan for the BF.

Q4: Launching conference of the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2009-2014 in Slovakia was held on 6 November 2012, where Programme Agreements for the programmes SK02, SK04, SK07 and SK09 were signed.

The second annual meeting of the EEA FM and the NFM 2009-2014 was held on 7 November 2012.

On 19 October 2012 donors delivered last comments on the submitted Work plan for the BF and the new (third) version of the Work plan for the BF was made and sent to the donors for approval on 14 December 2012.

Work plan 2013

Q1: Continuous preparation of reporting and information database
Continuous preparation of implementation documents for the bilateral fund at the national level.

Q2: Information events
Participation at selection committees meetings
Second meeting of the Monitoring Committee

After the work plan approval for the BF by the donors the preparation of implementation documents for the bilateral fund at the national level will be completed as soon as practicable.

Opening of bilateral fund at the national level for submitting of applications for contributions.

Q3: Participation at the Cooperation Committees meetings

Donors will be sent a detailed budget for the Technical Assistance for 2014

First on-the-spot verifications of projects

Processing of first applications for contributions from the applicants from bilateral fund at the national level, performance of bilateral activities and approval of submitted payment claims; performance of first predefined activities of the National Focal Point.

Q4: Third anniversary meeting

The process of bilateral fund activities implementation and preparation for the assessment of activities performed in the first year of the bilateral fund implementation at the national level.

3.4 Irregularities

No irregularities were found and identified in the process of the Strategic Report preparation.

3.5 Audit, monitoring, review and assessment

3.5.1 Audit

Based on the authorisation by the Head of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic an internal audit was done on 25 June 2012. The internal audit was performed in compliance with the Act No. 502/2001 Coll. on financial control and internal audit and on amendments and supplements to certain laws as amended. The audit verified the Internal Manual for the Employees of the National Coordination Unit for the EEA FM and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. This Internal Manual was prepared in compliance with the Regulations and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

No Government audits took place in the relevant period. As for the Government audit plan for 2013, it has not been prepared yet, because the plan of audits in 2013 depends on the programmes approval and management documentation of programme operators that is to be audited.

3.5.2 Work Activities of Certifying Authority

Bank accounts

On 27 March 2012 the Certifying Authority audited the bank accounts for receipts and payments:

- EEA FM (interest-bearing bank account);
- NFM FM (interest-bearing bank account);
- co-financing (account subsidised by the amount of EUR 782,307 from the state budget for 2012);
- irregularities;
- balancing.

Sending of estimate of expected expenditures

According to the regulations on the EEA and NFM financial mechanism implementation for 2009 – 2014 and based on documents provided by the Programme Operators the Certifying Authority sent the estimate of expected expenditures to the Office for Financial Mechanism on 13 February 2012, 14 May 2012, 17 September 2012 and 6 December 2012.

Financial drawing and IFR certification

Within the programme Technical Assistance Fund and the bilateral relations fund at the national level on 15 August 2012 the Certifying Authority received from the Office for Financial Mechanism the advance of EUR 142,117 and on 8 November 2012 the funds of the first interim payment in the amount of EUR 213,778 for the Technical Assistance Fund that were paid on a proportionate basis:

NFP – EUR 137,902.92 for the EEA FM; EUR 152,466.08 for EEA FM and EUR 51,242.00 for co-financing;

CA – EUR 20,325.98 for EEA FM; EUR 22,472.02 for EEA FM and EUR 7,552.00 for co-financing;

AA – EUR 10,794.10 for EEA FM; EUR 11,933.90 for EEA FM and EUR 4,011.00 for co-financing.

The advance for the bilateral relations fund at the national level was not provided by the Office for Financial Mechanism as at 31 December 2012.

Within the first interim financial report (IFR) for the programme of Technical Assistance Fund and bilateral relations fund at national level the amount of total eligible expenses was certified and approved for the relevant reporting period in the amount of EUR 139,840 for the donor resources, and subsequently submitted to the FMO in September 2012.

On 17 December 2012 the funds of the first advances determined for programmes in respect to which an agreement had been signed were received on the CA's accounts. The total amount of funds received EUR 4,090,075 will be paid to the Programme operators in January 2013 and will be structured as follows:

SK02 – EUR 2,566,490 for the EEA FM and EUR 452,910 for co-financing;

SK04 – EUR 222,624 for the EEA FM and EUR 39,287 for co-financing;

SK09 – EUR 1,300,961 for the NFM and EUR 229,581 for co-financing.

Organisational structure of the Certifying Authority:

Section for European and International Matters at the Ministry of Finance of the SR fulfilling in the conditions of the SR the duty of the Certifying Authority for the EEA Financial Mechanism and for the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the Programme Period 2009 – 2014 with the validity from 15 September 2012 according to the Amendment 27 to the Organisational Guideline changed its structure and name to the **Section of European Funds**. This organisational change has no impact on the system of financing and financial management of the EEA FM/NFM and all the former functions in respect to the EEA FN/NFM remain unchanged.

Methodological documents

For the period from 1 January 2012 till 31 December 2012 the Certifying Authority issued the following documents:

- The system of financing and financial management of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programme period 2009 - 2014, version 1.1 valid from 21 June 2012;
- Guideline 1/2012 – U about the forms used within the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programme period 2009 - 2014, version 1.0 valid from 19 April 2012, update of the relevant guideline, version 1.1 valid from 27 August 2012 and version 1.2 issued on 27 December 2012, valid from 2 January 2013.

3.5.3 Monitoring

The Programme Operator is liable to monitor the projects according to the conditions stipulated in the programme agreement and in the agreement about the programme implementation. With regard to the current situation monitoring is done by the Government Office of the SR. Because the National Focal Point performs monitoring also in the role of the Programme Operator the monitoring is limited to six in the course of the whole implementation period. Monitoring will take place in 2013 and 2014.

Basic inputs of monitoring at the level of projects:

1. Interim project report, annual programme report and final programme report;
2. On-the-spot projects control;
3. Interview with beneficiary and project partner;
4. Research with players operating on the relevant territory

According to the Regulations monitoring takes place at least once a year.

3.5.4 Monitoring Committee

14 members took part at the meeting of the Monitoring Committee which was held on 24 May 2012. The main point on the agenda was the approval of the Rules of Procedure and Strategic Reports for 2011. The Committee approved both documents by a resolution.

3.6 Informing and publicity

3.6.1 Overview and assessment of informing and publicity measures

Key informing and publicity measures which significantly supported the objectives set in the communication strategy were performed in 2012. The National Focal Point performs several communication activities from time to time, whereas the performance of these measures is based on the principle of efficient and quick communication with the controlled impact on target groups. This type of communication process can provide for improved transparency and efficiency of the EEA FM and NFM 2009-2014 implementation.

3.6.2 Communication Strategy preparation and approval

During the last quarter of 2011, the National Focal Point prepared and submitted the first version of the Communication Strategy to the donors for approval. Subsequently, on 17 January 2012 it received comments from the donors which were included and on 9 February 2012 the donors were sent the reviewed version of the Communication Strategy. The Communication Strategy was approved by the resolution of donors on 19 March 2012.

3.6.3 Programme Communication plans preparation and approval

For six programmes (out of the total of 9) the National Focal Point performs the Programme Operator duties. An obligatory attachment to programme proposals sent to the donors for the review in March 2012 were also the communication plans. The Programme Communication plan presents the starting documents for the performance of publicity measures at the programme level.

3.6.4 Website eeagrants.sk / norwaygrants.sk

The NFP administers the website www.eeagrants.sk and in cooperation with the IT and Electronic Services Department of the Government Office of the SR.

In the course of the first quarter of 2012 the website redesign was completed. A new structure of the website was made and all the information relating to the programme period of 2004 – 2009 was moved to archive. A complex graphical redesign of sites was made with the aim to create user-friendly and intuitive control of all the components of the web site as much as practicable.

3.6.5 Regular updates of information on websites

The NFP regularly publishes all the important information on websites. In 2012 tens of updates and basic documents were published.

3.6.6 Establishment and administration of filings mechanism

The filing mechanism was prepared according to the Article 11.8 of the Regulation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009 - 2014 and the Regulation of the NFM 2009 – 2014 Implementation with the aim to report a suspicion of disagreement with the principles of good management within the EEA FM and NFM implementation in the programme period 2009 – 2014 at all the management levels and their efficient processing and decision-making about them. The filing by means of the form prepared may be filed by any natural or legal person having a suspicion about or finding a disagreement with the principles of good management within the EEA FM and NFM 2009 – 2014 implementation. No such motion was filed within the relevant period.

3.6.7 Establishment and administration of the system for website visits rate monitoring

By means of the GoogleAnalytics portal the NFP established a system for the websites visits rate monitoring. The NFP monitors in detail the quantity of visitors on websites, time they spend on individual sites, exclusive visitors/returning visitors. With the help of this system it can efficiently assess the visit rate of the websites. In 2012 22,478 visits were recorded on the website including 51.30% of returning visitors (recorded according to unique IP addresses) and 48.70% of new web visitors. Out of the total visits 71.33% were the visitors from web nodes.sk and 28.67% from foreign web nodes. Higher average visit rates of websites were recorded in October and November 2012, most probably due to launching conferences. The average time spent by the visitor on the website was 3 minutes 21 seconds and clicking on more than four pages which is a signal that these were the visitors looking for specific information.

3.6.8 Creating pages for individual programmes

Within the websites redesign separate websites were created for individual programmes. Subsequently aliases (specific names of hypertext links) were defined that will automatically direct the user (visitor) to the programme's website. In cooperation with the communication plans of individual programmes the following hypertext aliases were made in the last quarter of 2012:

www.eeagrants.sk/climate	and	www.norwaygrants.sk/climate	for the programme SK02
www.eeagrants.sk/inclusion	and	www.norwaygrants.sk/inclusion	for the programme SK04
www.eeagrants.sk/culture	and	www.norwaygrants.sk/culture	for the programme SK05

3.6.9 Social network - Facebook

In compliance with the communication strategy the National Focal Point has made an account on the social network - Facebook named "EEA and Norway Grants Slovakia". The National Focal Point regularly publishes information on Facebook.

3.6.10 Launching conferences

Launching conference for EEA and Norway grants 2009 – 2014, held on 6 November 2012

The first launching conference of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009 – 2014 took place within the premises of the Bôrik hotel in Bratislava. More than 200 participants took part at the conference. At the launching conference the participants were informed about the possibilities of funds drawing in programmes supported from these grants. The conference was open to public and raised an exceptional interest. Four programme agreements for programmes focusing on the adaptation to climate changes, green industry innovations, social inclusion and prevention of domestic and gender-based violence were made during the conference.

Launching Conference for the Programme SK09 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

The conference “We hear you calling for help” devoted to the programme of domestic and gender-based violence took place on 26 November 2012 in the Bôrik hotel. The conference was arranged at the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and officially started the programme implementation in Slovakia. It also significantly supported 16 days of activism against the violence against women because the time from 25 November to 10 December is in many countries devoted to activities warning about this phenomenon in the society. In addition to domestic guests, the participants were addressed by guests from abroad and the representatives of public administration and non-governmental organisations working in this field. At the end of the conference all the participants symbolically hissed out the violence and thus expressed their refusal of domestic and gender-based violence in the society.

3.6.11 News releases

Within the launching conferences news releases were issued and published on the websites www.eegrants.sk and www.norwaygrants.sk. The news releases were sent by the Press and Information Department of the Government Office of the SR to news agencies.

3.6.12 Promotion items and materials

To support the visual identification the NFP prepared 10 roll-ups, 1,000 plastic ball pens, 200 umbrellas, 500 notepads, 250 whistles – all the promotion items and materials were produced with the logos of EEA Grants and Norway Grants and the logo of the Government Office of the SR.

3.6.13 Plan of measures relating to informing and publicity for 2013

Activity type (file)	Activity name
Web	Websites www.eegrants.sk and www.norwaygrants.sk – Regular publishing of updates Website monitoring

Social networks	Regular updates and communication by means of social network - Facebook
	Creation of user profiles on social network - Facebook
	Regular update of profiles on social network - Facebook
Bulletin	Electronic bulletin of the EEA FM and NFM in the programme period 2009 - 2014
Communication action plan preparation	Preparation and approval of communication action plan for the upcoming period (usually 1 year) by the National Focal Point in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Slovakia

3.7 Work plan

In 2013 the National Focal Point plans:

1. Preparing a manual for the beneficiary and partner as a methodological document to regulate the processes at projects implementation.
2. First monitoring of programmes.
3. Completing the process of information and reporting database creation.
4. Providing funds within the National Bilateral Fund.

4 SUBMITTING REPORTS ABOUT PROGRAMMES

The Programme operators were not obliged to submit the programme report for 2012. For this reason it is not relevant to fill in this point of the Strategic Report.

5 SUMMARY LISTING OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Focal Point has identified two principal issues:

1. Time delay.
2. Indicators in the programme of Adaptation to Climate Changes.

In respect to the time delay the National Focal Point – knowing the situation in other countries – considers it necessary to think about general extension of the eligibility of expenditures within the projects minimum till 30 April 2017.

The National Focal Point also recommends reviewing the programme proposal and programme agreement within the programme of Adaptation to Climate Changes, mainly in the area of indicators at the programme results level.

6 ATTACHMENTS

1. Assessment of bilateral cooperation by programme donor partners.