

# Strategic Report for Slovakia 2018

## EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021

Assessment of the contribution of the EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanisms toward reducing economic and social disparities and strengthening bilateral relations

in the Slovak Republic

Version 1.0



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers the period from the last Annual Meeting in Košice in March 2018 to January 2019.

### Effects of the Grants

The year 2018 was focused on preparation of Programmes and development of Programme Agreements. Therefore, the assessment of the effects of the Grants is not relevant for this report.

### Status of Programmes

Three Programme Agreements were signed in November 2018 (Domestic and Gender Based Violence Programme - DGV, Culture Programme - CLT and Good Governance Programme - GGC). The Concept Note of the Local Development Programme was not yet approved by the Donors. The Business and Innovation Programme (BIN) and Climate Change Adaptation Programme (ACC) are currently in the Programme Agreement development phase.

### Status of Bilateral Funds

In relation to the Fund for Bilateral Relations, the Work Plan has been developed and adopted by the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds in September 2018. The launching of implementation of pre-defined initiatives and open calls is expected early in 2019.

### Major risks

Key risks identified at this stage of implementation are related to potential low interest of applicants under some Programmes and delays in the public procurement.

### Changes in political, economic and social context

While 2018 could be seen as a rather turbulent year, incl. personal changes in the Government, these changes did not affect the implementation of the Grants in Slovakia. There have been no major changes that would affect the design and setup of the Programmes supported by the Grants.

### Changes in the management and control system

The Detailed Description of Management and Control System at the national level has been revised and is subject to the re-audit performed by the Ministry of Finance of the SR acting as the Audit Authority. There have been changes introduced in the National Focal Point's organisational structure, however, these changes did not affect the position of the Department of EEA and Norway Grants, where the National Focal Point is located.

## 2 POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

This chapter reflects the political, economic and social changes and trends in Slovakia in 2018, with focus on those that have had or might have an impact on the implementation of the Financial Mechanisms. This chapter covers the development in the areas of climate change, good governance and cross-border cooperation, culture, local development and social inclusion, business and innovation and education.

As part of its monitoring functions, the National Focal Point approached several independent experts to provide background information and their opinion on the recent development in the above mentioned areas, as well as on the recent set-up of the Programmes.

## 2.1 Culture

In 2018, Ms Ľubica Laššáková has been appointed as the Minister of Culture. The government further followed the Policy Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic from 2016, i.e. there have been no changes in formal declaration of state priorities in the field of cultural heritage. Basic trends of cultural policy were determined by fundamental strategic documents in the field of cultural heritage (particularly Strategy of the Protection of Monuments and Historic Sites 2017 – 2022), followed by the Action Plan of this strategy for 2018 – 2020 (Government Resolution No. 548/2018 of December 5th, 2018). The Pro-Monumenta project<sup>1</sup>, funded by EEA Grants (2009 - 2014), has been integrated into decision-making process and it currently presents a high level of added value.

Financial compensation at national level („grants“) was still provided by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic within its grant program „Let’s renew our house“, including a new sub-program, dedicated to support of modernization and comprehensive reconstruction of prioritized cultural monuments, established in 2017. According to public data, 574 projects (13.3 M €) were funded within this program as a whole in 2018<sup>2</sup>.

The Ministry of Culture awarded best renovated monuments in 2018 and the Behrens synagogue in Žilina<sup>3</sup>, whose reconstruction was funded by EEA and Norway grants (2009 - 2014), was one of them.

Due to the public interest on protection of cultural heritage, the attention should be paid to improving of condition of the most significant parts of architectonic and archaeological heritage in next program period. Before 2002, cultural monuments were divided into two categories - national cultural monuments (i.e. the most important, iconic monuments) and “regular” / “common” cultural monuments. This categorization is partially reflected in the Strategy of the Protection of Monuments and Historic Sites 2017 – 2022, adopted by Government Resolution no. 588/2017 of December 13th, 2017. Therefore, better condition, achieved by EEA Grants and verified by the Monuments Board, could be the most relevant indicator in the next program period, with strong impact on programme goals.

## 2.2 Climate Change

The framework document - the National Low Carbon Strategy 2050 is under development now (with the assistance of the World Bank) and should be adopted in 2019. The National Adaptation Strategy of the Slovak Republic on Adverse Impacts of Climate Change has been updated in 2018. The Action Plan for its implementation is being processed and will be available in 2020. The need for cooperation and coordination among sectors has been singled out as crucial when reaching the aims and the preparation of the Agenda 2030 also represents such an opportunity.

It is recommended to further incorporate the changing climate into the national legal framework to enable the “climate” progressive regions and cities to introduce their own legislative climate standards.

There are some examples of motivated local governments (e.g. Trnava City) and regional governments (e.g. Bratislava Self-Governing Region), which make considerable effort to deal with climate change in systematic way. At the national level, it could be mentioned the decision of the Ministry of Economy of

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<sup>1</sup> [www.promonumenta.sk](http://www.promonumenta.sk), 30.01.2019

<sup>2</sup> [www.culture.gov.sk](http://www.culture.gov.sk), 30.01.2019

<sup>3</sup> [www.culture.gov.sk](http://www.culture.gov.sk), 30.01.2019

the SR to stop supporting ineffective coal mining in Upper Nitra region (originally 2030, now 2023), promotion and support of electro-mobility and an effort to raise public awareness on climate change issues. A systemic and horizontal approach is expected to follow.

The national public survey conducted in larger cities (over 20 000 inhabitants) among broad public and representatives of city governments proved progress in the level of climate awareness (Carpathian Development Institute, 2018). The projects funded by the EEA Grants within the period 2009-2014 contributed to this fact significantly in the cities where projects were implemented. Nevertheless (as mentioned above), there are only few of local governments that have initiated, created and implemented the comprehensive climate policy. For example, only 13 local governments (out of 2 933) joined The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy until 2018.

As has been shown in previous years, that main focus (as far as climate change impacts are concerned) should be put in the future mainly on droughts, heatwaves, pluvial floods, or on storms in Slovakia. Much less on river floods, where damages are expected to be smaller compared the former ones.

Management of climate change requires governments in the following years to play an active role in moving the perception of interests, to maintain stable social majority in favour of the deployment of active mitigation and adaptation. Measures to make such a change include the following: building coalitions for change, turning opponents into collaborators, establishing new centres of expertise, creating new institutional actors, adjusting legal rights and responsibilities, and changing ideas and accepted norms and expectations.

## 2.3 Good Governance and Cross-border Cooperation

### Corruption and its prevention

The new government of Peter Pellegrini was appointed in March 2018. In order to regulate the anti-corruption policy of the SR and improve the system of anti-corruption prevention, the comprehensive document “Anti-Corruption Policy of the Slovak Republic for years 2019-2023” was approved by the government in December 2018. Based on this document, each ministry will be appointed anticorruption coordinator by the end of February 2019, who will coordinate the anti-corruption activities of the department, including a new model of corruption risk management. An expert working group - the Council of Anti-Corruption Prevention Coordinators - will be set up to support anticorruption policy. Its role is to guarantee the consistency of government anti-corruption policy, the interconnectedness and the coherence of sectoral anti-corruption policies. In order to increase transparency, the accountability of individual Ministries is emphasized not only for elaboration but also for successful implementation of its own anti-corruption program.<sup>4</sup>

Since number of measures aimed at combating corruption has been taken by the government, some positive trends in Slovak society are observed. However, these issues require a systematic approach at all levels of public administration, active civic society and involvement of relevant stakeholders that are able to improve anti-corruption environment.

### Cross-border cooperation Slovakia – Ukraine

Cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is strongly affected by the political, security and social situation in Ukraine. Special attention to Ukraine is also paid by the OSCE. The Slovak Republic took over the OSCE presidency in 2019 and the situation in Ukraine is one of the presidency's priorities. The first foreign visit of Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Miroslav Lajčák as the OBSE

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.bojprotikorupcii.gov.sk/data/files/7049\\_protikorupcna-politika-sr-2019-2023.pdf](https://www.bojprotikorupcii.gov.sk/data/files/7049_protikorupcna-politika-sr-2019-2023.pdf)

Chairperson-in-Office was to Ukraine, early 2019. Implementation of the Cross border cooperation programme from Norway Grants 2009-2014 proved the interest of Ukrainian partners for the mutual cooperation and potential for transfer of know-how from the countries of the EEA. However, current institutional cooperation in cross-border regions can be assessed as low. While some informal contacts at local and regional level exist, it is difficult to establish official dialogues and partnerships with Ukrainian institutions. There are also strong currency controls and administrative obstacles with transferring funds to Ukraine from abroad which has a negative impact on closer institutional cooperation. Positive changes in Ukraine have been noticed by the EU. In 2017, the visa-free regime for Ukrainian citizens was approved by the EU. It has created new opportunities for boosting cross-border collaboration, especially in tourism. Just a slight increase in that sector was recorded in Slovakia in 2018.

## **Public procurement**

Public procurement has long been facing criticism not only by business entities in Slovakia, but also by the contracting authorities themselves. In many cases, the processes in public procurement take longer than in neighboring countries.<sup>5</sup> The amendment to the Act on Public Procurement prepared by the Office for Public Procurement was approved in November 2018 and came into effect as of 1 January 2019. Besides adopting several measures which should reduce the administrative burden, the amendment also aimed to significantly increase thresholds for low-value purchases, introduce mandatory electronic communication between contracting authorities and tenderers and change the rules for procurement of construction works with using the electronic market.<sup>6</sup>

All the changes adopted are expecting not only to increase the efficiency of public spending but also make the processes more flexible and transparent. The amendment should abrogate a number of application problems, speed up and simplify the public procurement. The amendment to the Act on Public Procurement was consulted with the professional public at the initial stage of its preparation therefore, most of these changes are positively perceived by the general public.

The Slovak Republic has adopted *the National Action Plan for Green Public Procurement in the Slovak Republic for 2016-2020* in December 2016. Based on the survey conducted by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic in 2018, only 3,25 % of all public institutions involved have realized GPP in 2017. The aim of the Government is to reach 50 % of green public procurements (GPP) at central government level from all public procurement by 2020.<sup>7</sup>

## **Effectiveness of judiciary**

In the justice sector, the World Bank ranked Slovakia in 2017 as 18<sup>th</sup> of the EU countries (and 51<sup>st</sup> internationally) on the indicator Rule of Law<sup>8</sup>. According to the 2018 EU Justice Scoreboard, Slovakia ranks at the bottom in perceived judicial independence among all EU countries<sup>9</sup>. According to the same publication, Slovakia ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the number of judges per capita. The Slovak justice system has been affected by political changes and combined with the perception of corruption in the justice system, lead to a poor public trust and a lack of effectiveness and efficiency of the judiciary.

In 2018, new justice minister Gábor Gál was appointed in Peter Pellegrini's government. As he declared, systematic changes in justice launched by his predecessor will continue. Specialization and digitization of the courts and increasing of the preparation of new judges are among his priorities as minister.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://www.vssr.sk/clanok-z-titulky/velka-novela-zakona-o-verejnom-obstaravani-presla-do-druheho-citania-spravodajstvo-9-2018.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22000205/blog-public-procurement-needs-to-be-not-only-efficient-but-also-transparent.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://euractiv.sk/section/ekonomika-a-euro/news/slovenske-urady-sa-o-temu-zeleneho-verejneho-obstaravania-nezaujimaju/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb\\_ruleoflaw/](http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_ruleoflaw/)

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/justice\\_scoreboard\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/justice_scoreboard_2018_en.pdf)

Improving the quality and efficiency of Slovak courts is also a part of the government's manifesto. Some changes concerning the selection of the Constitutional Court justices and the openness of the prosecutor's offices to public control have already been adopted in 2018.<sup>10</sup>

Comprehensive judicial reform came to effect in 2017. The aim was to increase the transparency of the judiciary and its credibility in the eyes of the public. Based on that, all the court decisions must be published online, selection procedures for judges are open to public oversight, and judges have to declare their family ties within the judiciary annually as well as performance statistics. According to study published by the Transparency International Slovakia, the speed of decision-making increased by 7 % and the ratio of lower-court decisions confirmed by higher courts increased by 10 % in the first years after the introduction of reforms. The public trust in the judiciary has still not increased in 2018.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.4 Local Development and Social Inclusion

According to the newly published report under the title "The Revision of Expenses Assigned for Groups Endangered by Poverty and Social Exclusion"(January 2019) of the Value for Money department at the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, the stable macroeconomic growth within the last six years and unprecedented registered unemployment rate (5,04 % in December 2018) mirrors its effects also in the area of poverty and social exclusion risk rate. According to Eurostat, these figures have been in the Slovak Republic on a constant decline since 2013, reaching the rate of 16,3 % in year 2017 in comparison to the 22,5 % EU average. The share of people living in the conditions of serious material deprivation counts as average in comparison to the EU (7,0 %). In sum, the rest of all key indicators of social exclusion reviewed by the European Commission with the aim to monitor the progress within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy approximate or fall into the category of the European standard.

However, even if the Slovak Republic as a whole meets the EU standard in most of these indicators, some particular groups of inhabitants face a much more significant rate of poverty and social exclusion. These most vulnerable groups encompass Roma population, children from socially disadvantaged setting (SDS), and incomplete families with children and people with health disabilities. The above mentioned groups show much worse results in the social exclusion indicators in comparison to the whole population. Slovakia is situated right next to Bulgaria at the bottom of the EU countries scale in this regard.

With regard to education, there is almost no dispute among the experts that the most effective investment for the reduction of poverty and social exclusion is the investment into early childhood education and pre-school education. Slovakia, along with Ireland, Italy and Romania belong to the last four EU countries where the access to pre-schools education is not guaranteed or the participation in the pre-school education is not mandatory. Despite the fact that the Slovak Republic invests as much share of its GDP as other EU countries into pre-school education, it achieves the second lowest attendance rate in the whole EU. The overall attendance rate of children in the age of 3-5 from the general population is 75 %, whereas children from families on material need benefits reach 43 % and in the marginalized Roma communities (MRC) only 32 %. Those figures have enormous impact on the prospective educational pathways. Pupils from SDS and MRC are four times more likely to repeat grade than their peers from the general population. Pupils from MRC are overrepresented in the special stream of education – 63 % in special classes and 42 % in special schools. More than one third of the pupils from MRC terminate the compulsory education without the completion of ISCED 2 (lower secondary education). It amounts to 8 % of pupils in the whole population. Only about 50 % of pupils from MRC continue to attend some form of high school or vocational school (ISCED 3), whereas in the general population the attendance rate approximates to 80%. The intended youth/leisure centers

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<sup>10</sup> <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20836204/new-minister-wants-to-continue-with-initiated-projects.html>

<sup>11</sup> [https://transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Impact-Study\\_pdf\\_final.pdf](https://transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Impact-Study_pdf_final.pdf)

should by default combat the phenomenon of segregated school environments – the staff will be trained to be able to foster intentional social inclusion by organizing activities with the aim to mix Roma and non-Roma attendees.

It is a positive trend that Slovakia uses 130 mil. EUR in the current ESIF programming period for the extension, reconstruction or construction of newly built pre-school facilities. By the end of December 2018, 68% of these funds (app. 89 mil. EUR) have been contracted which will create approximately 11,147 new capacities for children in the pre-school age. The estimated number of the remaining allocated sum could potentially lead to creation of another 5,619 new capacities. The aim of the government is to enable as much children from the MRC to attend the pre-school facilities at the age of 3 as possible. The challenges which need to be addressed consist also in other types of barriers for early pre-school education of children from MRC – limited access (long distance from spatially segregated communities), financial burden (for parents not in material need) and cultural (fear of strange and potentially hostile environment).

The area of healthcare and health state manifests itself as another crucial component (alongside education, housing and employment) in the process of social inclusion of MRC. Whereas the life expectancy of people in general population was 76 years in 2015 in the Slovak Republic, people in the system of material need benefits reached in average only the age of 69. Even more alarming is the rate of infant mortality – it is more than three times higher by socially excluded people from MRC (13,1 infant deaths per 1000 births) than by general population (3,9 infant deaths per 1000 births). Therefore, the health component in the prepared program period of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, which consists in the establishment of early childhood intervention and youth sport/leisure centers with a strong emphasis on education in healthcare and healthy lifestyle could become effective tools for combatting the alarming figures in infant mortality and life expectancy of population in the MRC.

Last but not least, after the passage of the Law on Support of Lagging Regions (Act No. 336/2015 Coll.) in year 2015, the Slovak government enacted in the last year another important piece of legislation which should lead to the empowerment of social and economic development of the least developed districts and regions in Slovakia. It is the Law on Social Economy and Social Businesses (Act No. 112/2018 Coll.) which should give job opportunities to disadvantaged people with low level of education and skills. The partial subsidization of these businesses has the aim to prepare these workers for open labor market. It might become a much more effective tool for activation than the current system of activation works which do not offer many opportunities for learning a new set of skills useful for potential employer in the open labor market. Since the law is valid only from May 2018 and only seven businesses have been registered as “integrational social business” for people from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, it is too early measure any impact of them yet.

## 2.5 Business and Innovation

Slovak business environment is created mainly by small and medium-sized enterprises which represent more than 99 % of all companies. SMEs provide employment opportunities for almost 75 % of active labour force and participate in gross production and generation of added value with more than 50 %.<sup>12</sup>

The Slovak Republic has adopted the Strategy for Research and Innovations for the Intelligent Specialisation (RIS3 SK) 2014 - 2020 to contribute to the reform of the system of research, development and innovations and thus brings it close to the European average. The newly adopted Action Plan of Intelligent Industry (November 2018) should also contribute to this reform. The action plan includes 35

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<sup>12</sup> SBA, Report about the status of SMEs in Slovak Republic in 2016, Bratislava, October 2017, page 12



measures in areas such as research, development and innovation, basic IT security principles, labor market and education, reference architecture, standardization and technical standards, information and promotion. It will be implemented until 2020.<sup>13</sup>

The Slovak Ministry of Economy supports the implementation of innovations in companies, especially in SMEs, particularly via the EU operational programme Research and Innovation 2014-2020. The Ministry also supports the interconnection of SMEs with R&D institutions via innovation vouchers until 2020.

### **Green Industry Innovation**

Slovakia with the overall score of 75 is on the 20<sup>th</sup> place among the 28 EU Member States in the 2017 Eco-Innovation Scoreboard (Eco-IS). The results of the Global Business Monitor (GEM) survey for Slovakia show relatively low innovation of young entrepreneurs. The EU's ten-year growth strategy, 'Europe 2020', emphasizes the need for greener and more innovative economies and all EU countries have to meet ambitious targets on innovation, climate and energy. To achieve sustainable economic growth, investment in SMEs involved in green innovation, has high commercial risk and difficult approach to financing.

### **Welfare Technology and Ambient Assisted Living (WT and AAL)**

Due to demographic developments the demand in care of elderly and persons with disabilities will significantly increase over the coming years. Many people are at risk of being excluded from the information society and its benefits. Welfare technology consists of technology that will make the end-users more independent, provides them safety, security and mobility in and outside the home.

The European Commission has developed and implemented programs/projects on AAL concept with high involvement of SMEs. The two most important are MonAMI – International European project mainstreaming on ambient intelligence and the Assisted Living Program. The AAL program is financed by the EC (Horizon 2020) until 2020 with 17 European countries participating. Slovakia has not joined this programme yet, although one of the measure of the Slovak *National Strategy for Digital Integration (Nov 2008)* was to support the accession of Slovakia to this EC initiative.<sup>14</sup>

At the national level the subject of AAL and WT is reflected in several policies, including the *National Action Plan for the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care in the Social Services System 2016 – 2020*, the *National Priorities for the Development of Social Services 2015 – 2020*, the *National Strategy for Digital Integration and the National Programme for Active Ageing (2014 - 2020)*. These documents create mainly legal conditions to ensure transition from institutional to community-based care and assisted living facilities. The innovative and technological support for healthy ageing and inclusion of vulnerable persons living alone are not specifically mentioned in these policies, the financial support is only through the OP Research and Innovation 2014-2020 – support of Health Technology aiming at research institutions and businesses.

### **Start – ups**

Slovakia has already a working startup ecosystem. It may be small, but provides a good base from which to develop further. The majority of startups are in their early stages. Only about 15 % are growing their revenue or expanding to new markets. More than 50 % of start-ups do not use any innovation in their business. Startups, newly founded companies and SMEs have to cope with several obstacles. One of the most important barriers to the successful development of their business is the lack of access to finances. Co-working spaces, incubators, business angels, venture capitalists, and corporates are already involved.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.itapa.sk/8420-en/akcny-plan-inteligentneho-priemyslu/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.aal-europe.eu/>

The public sector has supported some activities and universities are increasing their engagement. The main challenge now is to bring the resources at hand.<sup>15</sup>

Startup support should focus on all newly established companies rather than selecting a few that are the most promising. Given the difficult environment startups face, the high insecurity and unpredictability of success, an additional filter should be avoided.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.6 Education

The development of education system belongs to the top government priorities. National Programme for Education Development approved by the Government in June 2018 introduces a 10-year implementation plan and identifies main concerns in the educational development: enhanced competence and quality of vocational education and training (VET) to meet labor market needs. In the area of higher education (HE) emphasis is given to the inclusion of experts from the non-academic sphere in the teaching process, closer connections between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the private sector, support to quality research and career development of researchers in HE.

Slovakia joined the European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EAfA) in 2014. The 2013 Research and Innovation Strategy for 2014-2020 stressed that all learners, including those in general education, need to acquire labor market relevant skills.

Slovakia adopted a new Act on VET in 2015 introducing a new dual educational system based on Austria, Germany and Switzerland models. After three years of its implementation the biggest challenges are identified mainly in: existing discrepancies between labor demand and offer, low interest of pupils in vocational educational and insufficient motivation of SMEs to join the dual education system. In addition, the lowest interest of learners in dual education was in the Prešov, and Košice Self-government regions covering the least developed areas of Slovakia.

The amendment Act on VET effective from September 2018 shall bring following solutions:<sup>17</sup>

- improve cooperation with all national level stakeholders; mainly between schools and SMEs;
- invest in high quality and modern dual VET, including redesigning curricula;
- strengthen awareness on dual education and make technical subjects and science more attractive to pupils through information campaigns and events;
- raising the number of companies and VET students in dual schemes through incentives: tax deduction and bonus for employers, scholarships, remuneration for productive work, and material support from employers for students.

## 2.7 Domestic and Gender-based Violence and Work-Life Balance

A significant milestone in increasing the level of protection of domestic violence victims was the adoption of the Act on Victims of Crime (effective from 1st January 2018, further as “the Act”) and the amendment of several legal acts. Among others, the expulsion order has been prolonged from 48 hours to 10 days; enabling the victim more time to secure her safety. The practical application of the Act brought in the first year some implementation challenges particularly concerning service provider’s obligation to accompany minors in court trials. An amendment of the Act valid from the January 2019 changed this practice by ensuring a free of charge lawyer for the minor. The Act established an accreditation system for services providing the victim’s protection as well as a financial mechanism to

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<sup>15</sup> EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Specific Support to Slovakia Boosting the Slovak Startup Ecosystem Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility

<sup>16</sup> KPMG, Startup Ecosystem Survey 2016

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/slovakia\\_-\\_vet\\_policy\\_developments.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/slovakia_-_vet_policy_developments.pdf)

support the accredited organisations. Furthermore, the Act includes a definition of “domestic violence” in the legal system as well as the responsibility of MLSAF of SR for this area.

An important step was the establishment of the Coordinating Methodical Centre for Gender-Based and Domestic Violence and the non-stop free of charge Helpline for Women Experiencing Violence. Currently, there are about 23 counselling centres with about 180 family places which provide support to victims of domestic violence, mostly focusing on women and their children. As a result, key indicators suggest a positive development during the last years; the prevalence of gender-based violence has decreased while the efficiency of the support system and the prosecution has increased. One of the major problems in the field of Domestic and Gender Based Violence is the financial sustainability of services provided to victims. The NGO’s analysis of funding mechanisms available in 2015 – 2018<sup>18</sup> disclosed that none of the 14 identified mechanisms is eligible and guarantying the sum of finances requested. Half of the funding mechanisms are conditioned by co-financing of NGOs in the range of 5 to 20 %. The Slovak Government, upon the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and Government Office, provided in 2017 and 2018 a subvention of nearly 2 million EUR to support these services including the Coordination and Methodological Centre. In 2018, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family announced a call under the European Structural and Investment Funds, so far providing more than EUR 3 mil to support these services whit some more projects to be evaluated. In combination with the Norway Grants, the sustainability of the network should be guaranteed for the upcoming three-four years. However, a sustainable mechanism of the funding needs to be still set up as a combination of governmental means according to Act with a combination of social service financing scheme.

The ratification of the Istanbul Convention is unlikely under the current composition of the Parliament; on the other hand, there is a strong consensus across the political spectre on the need for preventing and eliminating domestic and gender-based Violence. Already the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014-2019 was drafted in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention a new plan shall further elaborate on all measures and ensure a systematic approach.

The EAA and Norway Grants in the field of domestic and gender-based violence are considered as one of the most specifically targeted programmes complying with the Council of Europe’s standards. The transparent and participative process of setting up of the aims, activities, allocation, as well the selection criteria of the future beneficiaries is, however, essential for the successful programme implementation. Taking into account that the outcomes of the programme depend considerably on the trust and expertise of the NGOs providing specialised services, to establish collaborative space and facilitate the discussion is more than necessary.

In the field of Work-Life balance, it is positive that the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family supports the employment of women particularly by improving conditions for a reconciliation of work and family life. The support focuses on flexible working arrangements and childcare facilities. A network of 90 new nurseries with a capacity of 1,800 places will be built in next years. Furthermore gender equality is a cross-cutting principle for all programs and projects supported via ESIF.

At the same time, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family motivates fathers to participate more actively in childcare through the possibility of paternity leave in the duration of 28 weeks with an allowance level which equals nett income. The trend of fathers using this opportunity is increasing. While in 2014 there were less than 300 men on paternity leave, in 2018 it was already more than 5 300 men.

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<sup>18</sup> Holubová, B., ed. (2018), The Analysis of Financing of Specialized Services for Women Surviving Violence in Slovakia. Fenestra (forthcoming).

### 3 EFFECTS OF THE GRANTS

Due to the early stage of implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants programming period 2014 – 2021, there are no results to report in relation to progress towards reducing social and economic disparities and strengthening bilateral relations with Donor State entities.

### 4 STATUS OF PROGRAMMES

In the 2018 the work on preparation of the Programmes agreed in the Memoranda of Understanding continued. For three out of six Programmes the Programme Agreements were concluded between the Donors and the National Focal Point in November 2018.

#### 4.1 Business Development, Innovation and SMEs

The Concept Note for the Programme, officially submitted to the FMC for further consideration on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018, was successfully assessed by the Donors and the process of drafting of the Programme Agreement started in April 2018. In October 2018 the Programme Operator – Research Agency – organised *Seminar on the State Aid* in order to open discussion on how to implement the Programme in Slovakia taking into consideration the valid legislation and all obligations resulting from the Slovak national state aid rules. Due to these issues, the PO participated in so called *drafting meeting* with FMO in early November 2018. As a result of the seminar and the drafting meeting, the PO prepared a Memo for Donors explaining necessary limitations of the State Aid within the Programme and its impact on the expected results. The preparation of the Programme Agreement and the implementation framework continues.

Special concerns set in the Memoranda of Understanding were addressed in the Concept Note via Outcome 1 “Increased competitiveness of Slovak enterprises within the focus areas: Green Industry Innovation and Welfare Technology and Ambient Assisted Living technologies” and Outcome 2 “Education and Employment potential enhanced in Slovakia in Green Industry Innovation and Welfare and Ambient Assisted Living technologies”, for which 15% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme was allocated. The Concept Note further states that young and female entrepreneurs are specially mentioned as prioritized target groups. The practical application of the condition will be clearer once the Programme Agreement will be concluded.

#### 4.2 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

The Concept Note for the Programme was officially submitted to the FMC for further consideration on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Donors had no particular comments to the Programme and the process of drafting of the Programme Agreement started in mid-June 2018. In August 2018, the Programme Operator – Ministry of Environment of the SR – informed that the Project Promoter of the pre-defined project identified within the Concept Note based on special concern set in the Memorandum of Understanding on the EEA FM withdraws from the implementation. The possibility of new pre-defined project was discussed in the Cooperation Committee meeting organised in November 2018. The preparation of the Programme Agreement and the implementation framework continues.

There are no special concerns set in the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the NFM.

### **4.3 Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation**

The Concept Note for the Programme, officially submitted to the FMC for further consideration on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018, was successfully assessed by the Donors and the process of drafting of the Programme Agreement started at the end of May 2018. The Programme Agreement was concluded on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Currently the administrative act replacing the Programme Implementation Agreement is being prepared. All special concerns set in the Memorandum of Understanding were reflected in the Programme Agreement. The Programme Concept Note reflects the positive role of the culture and culture heritage in regional development. This potential positively contributes to the increase of employment, tourism and reduction of economic disparities. €2.5 million was allocated for 2 Calls under the small grant scheme focusing on contemporary art and culture. The Concept Note set maximum level of funding available for infrastructure at 60 % of the total eligible expenditure. The Ministry of Culture was involved in the all process of preparation of the Programme.

### **4.4 Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency / Cross-border Cooperation**

As the Concept Note was approved by the Donor States at the end of 2017, works on draft of the Programme Agreement have consequently started. The Programme Agreement was concluded on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Currently the administrative act replacing the Programme Implementation Agreement is being prepared. Special concerns set in the Memorandum of Understanding have been addressed by the Programme. Within the component Good Governance are planned three pre-defined projects addressing integrity of public administration, efficiency of the justice system and application of the Value for Money principle in public procurement (in cooperation with OECD). €2.5 million was allocated for an open call and a small grant scheme focusing on institutional cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine related to good governance. The Concept Note set maximum level of funding available for infrastructure at 30% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme.

### **4.5 Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion**

The Programme Operator – Government Office of the SR – is actively cooperating with FMO on preparation of the revised version of the Concept Note.

### **4.6 Domestic and Gender-based Violence**

In 2018 the work on the additional information to the Concept Note needed for concluding the Programme Agreement continued. The Programme Agreement was concluded on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Currently the administrative act replacing the Programme Implementation Agreement is being prepared.

The Programme Agreement reflects the special concerns set in the Memorandum of Understanding fully. It is built on the results achieved by the SK09 Programme, preserving the established services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence. Special focus is paid to children victims and vulnerable groups, such as victims with addictions, victims of sexual abuse. Outcome 1 is dedicated to increasing understanding of gender equality via awareness-raising activities, while providing schools from marginalised Roma communities to which lectures specifically focused on gender equality. Pre-defined project proposed in the MoU providing support to Coordination Methodological Centre shall be implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in partnership only with Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS). The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic is a Programme partner, involved in the preparation of the Programme, e.g. as a member of the Cooperation Committee. According to the condition set in the

Programme Agreement, the Ministry should be a voting member of the Selection Committee. The Concept Note set maximum level of funding available for infrastructure at 30% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme.

## 5 STATUS OF BILATERAL FUNDS

The second meeting of the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds (JCBF) took place on 13th April 2018 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The meeting focused on discussing the draft Work Plan. The third meeting was held from 10th to 14th September 2018 as per rollam procedure and the JCBF approved the Work Plan for 2018 – 2019. It was agreed that the Work Plan will focus on political, institutional and cultural cooperation. This decision was taken in order to reflect the upcoming major political events in Slovakia and the Donors States, such as the Slovak Presidency to the OSCE and OECD. The cultural component was selected to respond to the fact that 2018 was the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Next meeting of the JCBF is planned for February 2019, where the call texts focused on political, institutional and cultural cooperation and travel grants including selection criteria shall be discussed.

Since no funds from the FBR have been disbursed to Slovakia yet, there have been no activities undertaken neither at National nor at the Programme level. Given the implementation delays, it is also proposed to update the Work Plan and prolong the implementation period of the recent version until 2020.

## 6 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION<sup>19</sup>

### 6.1 Management and control systems

The management and control system in the Slovak Republic is centralised and unified for all programmes operated by Programme Operators designated by the National Focal Point. The purpose of centralisation and unification is to eliminate the imminent risk of a failure to draw the funds allocated for the Slovak Republic.

The Detailed Description of Management and Control System (hereinafter “DDMCS”) at national level revised in compliance with comments of the FMO was submitted to the Audit Authority.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 an organisational change within the Government Office of the SR (acting as the NFP) became effective. The Section of Bilateral Financial Instruments has been merged with the Section of Operational Programmes into a new section called Section of Financial Programmes. A new Department of Management and Control of the Bilateral Financial Instruments was established. The responsibility for the performance of all tasks of the National Focal Point, with the exception of elaboration of financial reports lies with EEA and Norway Grants Strategic Actions Unit under the Department of EEA and Norway Grants. Elaboration of financial reports is the responsibility of the Financial Management Unit under the Department of Management and Control of the Bilateral Financial Instruments. The implementation is not affected by these changes; on the contrary, it should help to improve the separation of functions and ensure more effective implementation management.

### 6.2 Complaints

No complaints have been received in the reporting period.

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<sup>19</sup> Source: NFP and Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic (MF SR) acting as AA and CA.

## 6.3 Irregularities

No irregularities have been reported the programming period 2014 – 2021 yet.

## 6.4 Audit

In October 2018, the Audit Authority started the performance of the re-audit of designation No. A868 and re-audit of designation No. A935. The re-audit of designation No. A868 is focused on the verification of the compliance of setting-up of management and control system at the level of the National Focal Point. The re-audit of designation No. A935 is focused on the verification of the compliance of setting-up of management and control system at the level of the Certifying Authority and the Irregularities Authority. The re-audits of designation No. A868 and No. A935 have not been completed in 2018.

## 7 COMMUNICATION

The Communication Strategy for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 in the Slovak Republic (approved by the FMC in August 2017) has to be updated by this Strategic Report due to several non-actual information related to timeframe of communication activities, new national slogan of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 and necessity to establish shorter titles and abbreviations of the Programmes. In addition, chapter dedicated to evaluation of communication indicators was added. Updated Communication Strategy is included in the Annex D to this Strategic Report.

Generally, the communication in 2018 fully depended on current status of implementation. All communication activities were focused on introduction to programming period 2014 – 2021 and presentation of best examples from programming period 2009 – 2014. Dealing with media representatives at national and regional level was significantly improved. At the same time, communication through Facebook was greatly enhanced.

The most significant communication activity was the Launching Conference of EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in Bratislava. Very strong interest of widest possible public and media representatives was recorded. Before the conference, an information campaign “Grants in a nutshell” was launched on Facebook. Every day in the period from 22<sup>nd</sup> October till 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018 the NFP published information about the Grants, results achieved in previous period and the new Programmes. The campaign was concluded by a competition for public “The best national slogan of the Grants”. Three best proposals were pre-selected and the authors were invited to the Launching Conference. The conference participants received voting tickets with the best proposals and could vote directly at the Conference. The winner with the most votes was slogan “Together for good ideas”. The author was presented and rewarded directly at the Conference.

Throughout 2018 the NFP participated in 8 communication activities focused on general presentation of EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 towards general public and representatives of municipalities.

The approved baseline study about awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants in Slovakia is already summarized within approved Communication Strategy 2014 – 2021 (Annex 2 Baseline and target values).

## 8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

### 8.1 Monitoring

As only three Programmes concluded the Programme Agreements in November 2018, the National Focal Point's monitoring functions were limited to the following:

1. Concept Notes assessment.
2. Collection of experts' opinions on the development in the Programme Areas targeted by the MoUs.

In both cases, the performance of these tasks has shown extremely valuable for the National Focal Point.

### 8.2 Evaluation

The first evaluation plan has been revised as there is overall delay in implementation of the Programmes. As mentioned earlier, only three out of six Programme Agreements has been concluded, in November 2018. The updated plan of evaluation is included in the Annex B to this Strategic Report.

## 9 ISSUES FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

Proposals for discussion at the Annual Meeting:

- Further steps in the development of the Programme Agreements for the remaining three programmes;
- Extension of the deadline (31 Dec. 2020) for the review of progress in the implementation of the MoU and the possible reallocations;
- Plan / Dates of possible trainings for NFP / PO on particular implementation topics;
- Plan / Dates of possible trainings for Audit Authority / Certifying Authority;
- Results from audit carried out at the Research Agency.

## 10 ANNEXES TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT

Annex A	Risk assessment and management plan
Annex B	Evaluation plan
Annex C	Cooperation with Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations
Annex D	Technical assistance report
Annex E	Communication Strategy, version 1.2



Programme name	Overall level of risk of the Programme (on a scale 1-4, where one is very low and 4 is very high)	Risks (key risks to the programme from the point of view of the NFP)	Responses to the risks (undertaken by the NFP in the last 12 months)	Responses to the risks (planned by the NFP in the next 12 months)
<b>Business Development, Innovation and SMEs</b>	3	Wide – range results framework set in the Concept Note causing complications in application of respective State Aid rules within the Programme.	The NFP recommended revision of the results framework and encouraged close cooperation of the PO with Antimonopoly Office of the SR (body responsible for State Aid area in SR). NFP actively participated in State Aid Seminar organised by the PO and provided information on previous experience with application of State Aid in other Programmes implemented.	The NFP will take actions to ensure conclusion of Programme Agreement minimising the risk of impossibility to fulfil the expected results of the Programme.
<b>Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion<sup>1</sup></b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation</b>	2	Difficulties related to public procurement resulting in delays and ineligible expenditures	-	NFP will prepare the Guide for Project Promoters and partners explaining the rules applicable to public procurement.
<b>Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation</b>	1	Difficulties related to public procurement resulting in delays and ineligible expenditures	-	NFP will prepare the Guide for Project Promoters and partners explaining the rules applicable to public procurement.
<b>Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency / Cross-border Cooperation</b>	3	Low interest from potential applicants in open call/small grant scheme. Difficulties related to meet the EU standard implementation rules on the side of Ukrainian project partners.	The NFP promoted the Programme, its aim and measures at the Launching Conference in November 2018. Individual information for potential applicants was provided at the Conference.	NFP will continue targeted promotion of the Programme among potential applicants. NFP will prepare the Guide for Project Promoters and partners explaining the implementation rules.

<sup>1</sup> The risk assessment is not provided, as the Concept Note is not fully developed yet.

Programme name	Overall level of risk of the Programme (on a scale 1-4, where one is very low and 4 is very high)	Risks (key risks to the programme from the point of view of the NFP)	Responses to the risks (undertaken by the NFP in the last 12 months)	Responses to the risks (planned by the NFP in the next 12 months)
<b>Domestic and Gender-based Violence</b>	2	Low interest from potential applicants in open calls due to other available funding mechanisms and low capacity of the organisations active in the area.	The NFP promoted the Programme, its aim and measures at the Launching Conference in November 2018. Individual information for potential applicants was provided at the Conference.	NFP will continue targeted promotion of the Programme among potential applicants.

Programme Information				Evaluation Information							
Programme # and title	Sector	Duration (Start/End)	Budget (EUR)	Type of Evaluation Formative/ Summative Impact/ Implementation	Evaluation Objectives Reason and learning goals	Timing Mid-term or Final Evaluation (ex post) Year	Data needs and collection methods Reports; interviews; surveys; other	Evaluation Start/End Date	Evaluation Budget (EUR)	Past Evaluations (if any): Type and Completion Date	Learning and Knowledge Sharing Who will benefit from the evaluation? How will findings be shared?
Business Development, Innovation and SMEs	Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness	TBD	23,529,413	Formative / Implementation	Relevance / Coherence, Efficiency	Mid-term Evaluation	Reports, interviews, analysis / surveys (TBD)	2022-2023	17,000	N/A	<p>Evaluation Report and its summary for general public will be published at the NFP webpage and distributed to all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Result of the evaluation will be shared across sectors and other partners from BS and DS.</p> <p>Depending on the findings, the NFP will request response from relevant subjects how will be the findings taken into account for future decision making process.</p>
Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion	Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction	TBD	17,647,059	Summative / Impact	Impact / Sustainability	Final Evaluation	Reports, interviews, surveys (TBD)	TBD (2023-2024)	17,000	N/A	
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy	TBD	18,823,530	Summative / Impact	Impact / Sustainability	Final Evaluation	Reports, interviews, surveys (TBD)	TBD (2023-2024)	17,000	N/A	
Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance, and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms	TBD	20,588,236	Summative / Impact	Impact / Sustainability	Final Evaluation	Reports, interviews, surveys (TBD)	TBD (2023-2024)	17,000	N/A	
Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency / Cross-border Cooperation	Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance, and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms	TBD	10,000,000	Summative / Impact	Impact / Sustainability	Final Evaluation	Reports, interviews, surveys (TBD)	TBD (2023-2024)	17,000	N/A	

Programme Information				Evaluation Information							
Programme # and title	Sector	Duration (Start/End)	Budget (EUR)	Type of Evaluation Formative/ Summative Impact/ Implementation	Evaluation Objectives Reason and learning goals	Timing Mid-term or Final Evaluation (ex post) Year	Data needs and collection methods Reports; interviews; surveys; other	Evaluation Start/End Date	Evaluation Budget (EUR)	Past Evaluations (if any): Type and Completion Date	Learning and Knowledge Sharing Who will benefit from the evaluation? How will findings be shared?
Domestic and Gender-based Violence	Justice and Home Affairs	TBD	10,588,236	Formative / Implementation	Relevance / Coherence Effectiveness	Mid-term Evaluation	Reports, interviews, analysis / surveys (TBD)	2022-2023	17,000	N/A	

## **COOPERATION WITH DONOR PROGRAMME PARTNERS AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

Three out of six programmes the Programme Agreements were concluded in November 2018, therefore the assessment of the quality of cooperation of the Programme Operators with Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organizations will be provided in the next Strategic Report. From the perspective of the NFP the communication between the partners in flexible and fruitful and its positive impact on the Programmes is expected.

Good example of cooperation of Programme Operator with DPP is the State Aid Seminar organised in October 2018 by Research Agency. The DPP Innovation Norway actively participated in the seminar, presented the practice related to application of state aid in Norway for other programmes where Innovation Norway acts as Programme Operator. The Antimonopoly Office of the SR presented the legal basis related to state aid in Slovakia. The PO and DPP discussed possible options for implementation of the Programme in Slovakia, taking into consideration the valid legislation and all obligations resulting from the Slovak national state aid rules. As a result of this seminar, the PO and DPP identified state aid categories that could be used within the Programme and prepared abovementioned Memo for Donors explaining necessary limitations of the state aid within the Programme.

# ***The Communication Strategy for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 in the Slovak Republic***

***Revised version 1.2, February 2019***

***Elaborated by the National Focal Point***



## Introduction:

The National Focal Point (NFP) originally elaborated the Communication Strategy (CS) in May 2017, at the time when the respective Programme Operators were preparing the Concept Notes.

Generally, the CS will be updated based on need but at least once a year in the Strategic Report. Before the updated version will be prepared, an evaluation and monitoring of all realised publicity activities will be done.

This update of the CS reflects mainly current timeframe of implementation (2019). The next update of the CS will be carried out in 2020 when all Programme Agreements will be signed.

The National Focal Point – EEA and Norway Grants Strategic Actions Unit is responsible for the elaboration, updating, monitoring and evaluation of this CS. The CS and its implementation will be done in close cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bratislava (Norwegian Embassy).

### 1. Objective

The ***overall aim*** of the communication measures is to increase public awareness on existence of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021 in Slovakia and provide information to the public on its objectives, possibilities, implementation and impact, as well as make the cooperation with the Donor States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway more visible.

***The partial aims*** shall be:

- a) Increase public awareness and inform the general public about the possibilities provided by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021.
- b) Increase public awareness about the Donor states and their roles, and about the mutual cooperation between the Slovak Republic and the Donor states.
- c) Inform potential project promoters and their partners about the availability of the EEA and Norway Grants.
- d) Communicate and present the achieved results and impact of the EEA and Norway Grants.

### 2. Target groups

1. ***Primary target group*** of the NFP's communication measures is the general public,
2. ***Secondary target group*** consists of Programme Operators and potential project promoters, FMO/FMC, Donor Programme Partners, and International Partner Organisations and partner entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway,
3. ***Tertiary target group*** is the professional public and media.

For all three target groups, but mainly for group 1, the overall message "*Working Together for a Green, Competitive and Inclusive Europe*" will be massively promoted.

The national slogan of the EEA and Norway Grants "*Together for good ideas*" will be promoted under implementation of communication measures at the NFP/PO level. The national slogan was selected

based on result of competition for public “The best national slogan of the Grants” that was part of information campaign “Grants in a nutshell” launched on Facebook from October to November 2018.

Communication network with the POs : There will be a non-formal working group consisting of the NFP and all POs (in case that the NFP is also the PO a member of the working group will be a project manager; in case of the Research Agency and the Ministry of Environment a member of the working committee will be a person responsible for communication) and the Norwegian Embassy. The NFP will send an enquiry to sum up important information about the expected events/ progress/ action in each programme on a monthly basis. The NFP will summarize the received information and will either publish them or, if it is needed, communicate further with the POs. The communication will be mostly electronical to keep it flexible and the Norwegian Embassy will be copied.

At least once a year (preferably before the Annual Meeting), the working group will meet and will discuss the most important milestones of the upcoming year.

### 3. Strategies

The NFP established shorter working titles and abbreviations of the Programmes to be used within standard daily communication focused mainly on general public (with exception of legal documents).

<b>Official title of the Programme</b>	<b>Shorter title</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Business Development, Innovation and SMEs	<b>Business and Innovation</b>	<b>BIN</b>
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	<b>Climate change</b>	<b>ACC</b>
Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	<b>Culture</b>	<b>CLT</b>
Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency / Cross-border Cooperation	<b>Good Governance and Cross-border Cooperation</b>	<b>GGC</b>
Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion	<b>Local Development and Inclusion</b>	<b>LDI</b>
Domestic and Gender-based Violence	<b>Domestic and Gender-based Violence</b>	<b>DGV</b>

The provided information will be tailored to the target groups and different types of communication channels will be used:

<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	<b>Type of provided information</b>	<b>Type of communication channels</b>
1. General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “basic” information about the new period of the EEA and Norway Grants</li> <li>- information about the actual status of the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants and achieved results and outcomes</li> <li>- information about cooperation (what could be achieved together or what has been already achieved) among the Slovak Republic and the Donors states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- media (print media, on line media, TV and radio);</li> <li>- websites: <a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk">www.eeagrants.sk</a> or <a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> and websites: <a href="http://www.vyskumnaagentura.sk">www.vyskumnaagentura.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.minzp.sk/">www.minzp.sk/</a></li> <li>- Social media – Facebook</li> <li>- major information activities organized by the NFP</li> <li>- brochures and leaflets</li> </ul>
2. POs and potential project promoters, FMO/FMC, DPPs, and IPOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about the actual status of the implementation, specially about the calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- media (print media, online media, radio, TV);</li> <li>- websites: <a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk">www.eeagrants.sk</a> or</li> </ul>



and partner entities from the donor states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about the approved, contracted and implemented projects and bilateral activities</li> <li>- Information about the possibilities of bilateral cooperation, especially about the call under the BF</li> <li>- Information about the new guidelines</li> <li>- Information about the achieved results and outcomes</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> and websites:</p> <p><a href="http://www.vyskumnaagentura.sk">www.vyskumnaagentura.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.minzp.sk/">www.minzp.sk/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media – Facebook</li> <li>- major information activities organized by the NFP</li> <li>- workshops and seminars focused on rules and requirements of the EEA and Norway Grants</li> <li>-matchmaking seminars focused on possibilities given by the BF</li> <li>- study trips</li> <li>- events organized mainly for youth to bring together young people from Slovakia and from the Donor states to introduce them different projects supported by the EEA and Norway Grants, to give them the opportunity to make new contacts and to get to know Slovakia and the Donor states (events such as Herkules on bicycle organized in the summer of 2016)</li> <li>- brochures and leaflets</li> </ul>
3. Professional public and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about the actual status of the implementation,</li> <li>- Information about the approved, contracted and implemented projects and bilateral activities</li> <li>- Information about the possibilities of the bilateral cooperation,</li> <li>- Information about the achieved results and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- media (print media, online media, radio, TV);</li> <li>- websites: <a href="http://www.eeagrants.sk">www.eeagrants.sk</a> or <a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> and websites: <a href="http://www.vyskumnaagentura.sk">www.vyskumnaagentura.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.minzp.sk/">www.minzp.sk/</a></li> <li>- Social media – Facebook</li> <li>- major information activities organized by the NFP / for media press conferences</li> <li>- study trips</li> <li>- direct emails</li> <li>- brochures and leaflets</li> </ul>

#### 4. Major activities

The NFP will, during the whole implementation period, organize several publicity activities. The NFP will coordinate its publicity activities with the POs` publicity activities and with the Royal Norwegian Embassy`s publicity activities to avoid possible duplicity. As the minimum, the following publicity activities are planned to be organized by the NFP:

Activity	Preliminary term	Target Group	The aim	Communication channels
1. Launching conference(s)	IV. Q 2018	All target groups	partial aims a), b) and c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- websites: <a href="http://www.eegrants.sk">www.eegrants.sk</a> or <a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> and websites: <a href="http://www.vyskumnaagentura.sk">www.vyskumnaagentura.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.minzp.sk/">www.minzp.sk/</a></li> <li>- Social media – Facebook</li> <li>- for media press conferences</li> <li>- direct emails</li> <li>- leaflets</li> </ul>
2. Closing conference(s)	2024	All target groups	partial aims b) and d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- websites: <a href="http://www.eegrants.sk">www.eegrants.sk</a> or <a href="http://www.norwaygrants.sk">www.norwaygrants.sk</a> and websites: <a href="http://www.vyskumnaagentura.sk">www.vyskumnaagentura.sk</a> and <a href="http://www.minzp.sk/">www.minzp.sk/</a></li> <li>- Social media – Facebook</li> <li>- media press conferences</li> <li>- study trips to visit selected projects</li> <li>- direct emails</li> <li>- brochure</li> </ul>
3. Other activities will be organized based on progress in the implementation, needs and opportunities. The NFP is fully aware of the minimal requirement to organize at least three major activities.	2019 - 2023	All target groups	All partial aims	

### 5. Web strategy (dedicated website, use of social media)

The web strategy, as one of the partial communication strategies, will contribute to reach the overall aim of the communication measures. Through the websites information to all target groups will be provided.

There will be a single web page for both FMs managed by the NFP. It is possible to hyperlink this web page via both addresses [www.eegrants.sk](http://www.eegrants.sk) and [www.norwaygrants.sk](http://www.norwaygrants.sk). Under this webpage there will be subpages for all programmes (one subpage per one programme). For those programmes which are managed by the NFP, all information will be available on this relevant subpage. For Environment and Business programs the most important information will be published along with a link to their official webpages. The NFP will cooperate with all POs to ensure that actual and appropriate information are published in both languages (Slovak and English language).

The total traffic at the above mentioned webpages in 2016: A total of 121,142 page views and 34,321 visits were recorded, with returning visitors accounting for 45.20% and new visitors of the website accounting for 54.80%.

The NFP administers a profile on Facebook under the title “EEA and Norway Grants Slovakia”. At the end of May 2017, the Facebook profile had 540 likes. Based on NFP’s internal rules, the content of the Facebook profile (the only social media which is allowed to be used) has to have the same content as the web page. In addition, it is allowed to publish a link to news published by any other entity on NFP’s Facebook account.

For the time being, the NFP does not administrate any account on LinkedIn, Twitter or Instagram. The NFP as part of the Government Office has to follow the internal rules concerning PR, including social media.

## 6. Department responsible for implementation of measures including contact person

The Strategic Actions Unit is responsible for the implementation of the CS.

The main contact person:

Head of the Strategic Action Unit

Boris Striženec

Phone: +421 2 209 25 576

Email: [boris.strizenec@vlada.gov.sk](mailto:boris.strizenec@vlada.gov.sk)

The deputy contact person:

Monitoring and Evaluation Manager

Žofia Gulášová

Phone: +421 2 209 25 521

Email: [zofia.gulasova@vlada.gov.sk](mailto:zofia.gulasova@vlada.gov.sk)

## 7. Plan for evaluation

The NFP will have to evaluate the communication activities which were done mainly in terms of visibility and awareness of the EEA and Norway Grants. The evaluation is necessary to ensure that the overall aim and partial aims will be reached. The plan for evaluation will regularly be updated based on the update of the plan of communication activities.

Indicators of the overall aim	Units	Target value	Source of information	Deadline for next evaluation
Number of processed questionnaires	number	4500	Annual Projects Reports and Final Projects Reports	2021, 2024
Percentage of respondents who knew of the EEA and Norway Grants prior to completing the questionnaire.	%	70 %	Annual Projects Reports and Final Projects Reports	2021, 2024
The number of respondents who correctly answered at least three questions from the questionnaire.	number	65 %	Annual Projects Reports and Final Projects Reports	2021, 2024
Number of respondents	number	55 %	Annual Projects	2021, 2024

who were able to answer the question “which countries contribute to the EEA Grants”			Reports and Final Projects Reports	
<b>Indicators of the partial aims</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Target value</b>	<b>Source of information</b>	<b>Deadline for evaluation</b>
Major activities including press conferences	number	At least 3	Invitation, program, attendance sheet	2019 2021 2024
Increased total number of web page view	Number	At least 139,313 web page view	Google Analytics	1Q 2020
Increased total number of likes on Facebook	Number	At least 1,000 likes	Facebook Statistics	1Q 2020
Brochure about the achieved results and outcomes	Number	At least 400	List of participants of events where the brochure will be distributed, distribution list	2024
Leaflet about the possibilities offered by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 / 2021	Number	At least 200 leaflets given to participants at the Launching Conference(s)	List of participants	4Q 2017

## 8. Evaluation of achieved values of indicators

Indicators of the overall aim are being evaluated based on the Annual Projects Reports and Final Projects Reports (source of verification). As there were no projects implemented in 2018, these indicators cannot be evaluated in 1Q 2019. Due to this, the first evaluation was postponed until 2021, when it is expected that majority of projects to be supported within the programming period will be already contracted and in the phase of implementation.

First evaluation of the indicators of the partial aims was postponed until 1Q 2019, due to real timeframe of implementation of the communication activities envisaged in this Communication Strategy.

<b>Indicators of the partial aims</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Major activities including press conferences	0	3	1	Launching Conference of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 – 2021, November 2018
Increased total number of web page view	121,142	139,313*	112,678	Google Analytics for period 06/2017 – 06/2018. The number of page views was not increased by 15% due to delay in launching of Programmes as well as particular Calls.
Increased total number of likes on	540	621*	592	Facebook Statistics at the end of June 2018. The number of likes was not

Facebook				increased by 15% due to delay in launching of Programmes as well as particular Calls.
Brochure about the achieved results and outcomes	0	400	0	
Leaflet about the possibilities offered by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014 - 2021	0	200	0	During the CS development in 2017 was expected that all Programme Agreements will be signed before the Launching Conference of the EEA and Norway Grants. The leaflet about the possibilities offered was not prepared, as at the time of the Launching Conference no Programme Agreements were signed. Therefore the leaflets would have contained only general information about Programmes and the NFP considered this tool as unnecessary. This kind of information was promoted by the NFP via other communication channels. In 2018, EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 were introduced within 8 different events across the Slovakia with very high media coverage, in very successful cooperation with Association of Town and Communities (ZMOS) and SARIO – Slovak Investments and Trade Development Agency.

\* target value was set for period until June 2018. New target value for reporting period until 2020 was set in the chapter 7.

Annex 1: SWOT analysis

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dominantly positive connotations linked to the EEA and Norway Grants;</li> <li>- Simpler administration procedures of the projects financed by the EEA and Norway Grants in comparison with the Structural Funds;</li> <li>- Experienced team at the NFP with implementation of EEA and Norway Grants (the NFP's team has been working with these grants since programming period 2004-2009);</li> <li>- Close and good cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bratislava and the FMO;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To increase the overall awareness of general public about opportunities, results and impact brought by the EEA and Norway grants ;</li> <li>- To support development of partnership between Slovak and Donor State Entities through effective communication;</li> <li>- To promote the simpler administration procedures of the projects financed by the EEA and Norway grants in comparison with Structural Funds;</li> <li>- Promote the high degree of transparency through effective communication;</li> </ul>
<b>WEAKNESSES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low interest of media in "project success stories";</li> <li>- Limited budget for publicity</li> <li>- Regulated internal processes at the NFP concerning PR, linked e.g. to social media (LinkedIn, Twitter or Instagram)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative experiences of potential applicants with the Structural Funds applicants / other types of foreign financial aid from the past (particularly demanding financial management, etc.);</li> <li>- Complicated process of public procurement which might potentially be a threat when the NFP has to procure some publicity services</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Baseline and target values

Within the 299 projects implemented in the 2009 – 2014 programming period of the EEA and Norway Grants, the general awareness concerning basic information about the EEA and Norway Grants and about the Donor states was evaluated through a questionnaire (the same questionnaire was used in all projects). Based on the figures which are available today, the following results have been achieved:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants period 2009 – 2014 (baseline)</b>	<b>EEA and Norway Grants period 2014 – 2021 (target for the year 2021)</b>
Number of processed questionnaires	3725	4500
Percentage of respondents who knew of the EEA and Norway Grants prior to completing the questionnaire.	53 %	70 %
The number of respondents who correctly answered at least three questions from the questionnaire.	59 %	65 %
Number of respondents who were able to answer the question “which countries contribute to the EEA Grants”	47 % (The result from the period 2009 – 2014 is not satisfactory for the NFP. Based on the collected information and own experience, the respondents did not know that Island and Lichtenstein are donor states. In contrast, almost all respondents recognised Norway correctly as a donor state. That is why the NFP will try to promote all three donor states and will recommend to the POs whose programmes are financed from the EEA FM to realize communication activities to improve this result.)	55 %

The NFP, based on the figures from the programming period 2009 – 2014 available as of the end of May 2017, has set the above mentioned figures as target figures which should indicate the successful achievement of the overall aim.