

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT

FM14-21

Slovakia

SK-LOCALDEV Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma
Inclusion

2023

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

B. PERFORMANCE

1. Programme progress and results

Objectives

In 2023, the Programme Operator (PO) and the Project Promoters (PPs) focused on the implementation phase of the projects. The objective of the Programme Strengthened social and economic cohesion is supported through local development and reducing poverty, with a strong focus on vulnerable groups at high risk of exclusion and Roma inclusion and their empowerment, mainly by activities directly implemented in marginalized Roma communities (MRK).

The Slovak Republic belongs to OECD countries with the highest regional disparities increase. The balanced regional development is an important part of the EU policy and the Slovak government, to which the Local Development and Inclusion Programme (LDI Programme) significantly contributes.

The Programme Operator - the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (MIRRI) is responsible for coordinating the preparation of regional development policies. During 2023, amending of Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on the support of regional development was successful, and thus the legislative adjustments of the support of regional development were connected with the tools for the implementation of European Union funds.

By the end of 2023, there were still 20 districts on the list of the least developed districts (LDD) meeting the criteria according to Act No. 336/2015 Coll. on the support for the least developed districts. The least developed districts belong to Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica region and this shows persistent regional disparities between western and eastern part of the Slovak Republic. The LDI Programme thus provides a special support to the regions with high unemployment and low economic performance. In addition to contributing to the reduction of unemployment in these regions, the LDI Programme helps them with insufficient infrastructure, social exclusion of marginalized communities, and low quality of primary and secondary education. In order to promote social inclusion and fight against poverty, it is essential to support the construction of a modern infrastructure for social, educational, cultural and recreational services, including sport facilities focusing on children with special needs, elderly people and people with disabilities. Within the LDI Programme, there is special focus on children, youth, young adults, as well as on support of Roma women empowerment.

The cost-efficient and sustainable measures that integrate education, housing, employment, health and non-discrimination components are implementing to strengthen social and economic development and decrease the regional disparities. Altogether, the measures are implementing in 13 least developed districts (both components local development and Roma inclusion) and in 6 other districts, including Bratislava Self-government Region.

To utilize the potential of the LDDs and their local communities, a steering committee was established in each district, whose members are representatives of the local state administration, self-government, socio-economic partners, the non-governmental sector, as well as other organizations operating in the district. One of their main tasks is preparation of development plans, which are elaborated for 5-years period. In 2023, the new development plans for 5 districts were approved. They identify activities, measures and tasks, which specifically reflect the needs and potential of the district.

More than 67.4 million € was allotted in Slovakia for the period 2022-2028, which will be allocated to support LDDs in the form of a regional contribution. This will help the PPs with the sustainability of the projects' results.

Contribution of the projects is the improvement of the cooperation between regional development entities, improvement of the quality of living standards of population in the supported districts, prevention of social exclusion and mitigation of its negative impacts, the promotion of equality of opportunities at the labour market, the support of marginalized communities, the promotion of the physical culture and sport.

Currently, there is a discussion about the need to change the definition of the least developed districts and their transformation into so-called priority districts, which should be defined by a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators, from the level of unemployment, through the level of education, to the available infrastructure. The impetus for the change is the fact that the current law looks at the level of development of Slovak regions exclusively through the lens of registered unemployment, which does not adequately reflect the real state of the regions.

As regards the Roma inclusion in the context of political and legislative developments in Slovakia in 2023 the relevant Action plans for the years 2021-2023 were continuously monitored during the year 2023. The monitoring and evaluation is a part of "Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030" (the Strategy) approved by the Government by Resolution no. 181/2021 of 7 April 2021. The Strategy is not only the most important document for national policymaking but also the so-called basic condition for use of new EU structural funds in the period 2021-2027. The Strategy focuses on areas such as education, employment, housing, health and the fight against anti-Roma racism and participation, which are also supported through the LDI Programme.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR for Roma communities, the LDI Programme partner, is the important part of the Roma inclusion in Slovakia. It has 10 regional branches in the areas with the highest density of Roma population. They help the municipalities to tackle challenges related to the life of the Roma minority.

In 2023, there were several surveys done about the living conditions of Roma population, namely: "Barriers of Roma women in health care accessibility with priority to general practitioners and gynecologists", "Misconducts against Roma by public institutions including police" and "Situation in housing of Roma communities". All are accessible at the web page of the Office of the Plenipotentiary.

In 2023, the National Focal Point in cooperation with the Financial Mechanism Office organized the Roma round-table discussion. It is clear that it is necessary to continue with the support of Roma Inclusion and the balance between the huge grant schemes and the EEA and Norway Grants has to be found mainly in the focus of the mechanisms or programmes. Using of three principles Communication, Cooperation and Complementarity is needed. Communication with the majority population has been identified as crucial for the future.

Outcome 1: Social and economic development of the least developed districts strengthened

In 2023, eight projects were implemented and contributed to the strengthening of the social and economic development of the eight least developed districts. For cancelled LDI01002 project (Municipality Rožkovany) the agreement on the termination of the project was signed in January 2023. Within outcome 1 8 multifunctional centres for youth have been established in cooperation with different entities in the region. For some of them the construction works are still in progress, however the activities focused on work with children and youth can be implemented. The multifunctional youth centres serve mainly as a space for leisure time and inspiration, as well as education centre for children and youth. Over time, there has been a significant increase in number of clients using the services provided within the projects from various social backgrounds (socially and medically disadvantaged, Roma communities, etc.) The centres regularly connect communities. They try to actively involve children and young people from Roma communities in joint activities and thus integrate them into society. A significant part of the activities is to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds find employment on the labour market. Further, different kind of activities related to health and healthy life style and non-discrimination are being carried out.

As there was a delay within the projects' implementation, the PO after comprehensive assessment of the projects' status decided to postpone the condition of 12 months operation of the multifunctional Youth Centres by the PPs' own resources (before approval of the final project report), in order to foster the sustainability principle. The period has been stated from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024.

The project LDI01009 (Municipality Jelšava) had encountered unexpected problems with the public procurement, which caused there was not enough time for reconstruction of the building they originally wanted to use for the future activities of the multifunctional centre for youth. The premises have been changed and the building, which required just small reconstruction works on heating, replaced it. Based on this, the project grant was decreased and the available funds was a basis for launching of the 2nd call for additional funds for the projects implemented in the programme. On the other hand, the LDI01009 is a good example of the Roma inclusion, cooperation with the MRK and involvement of the Norwegian partner that spent in Jelšava the whole August 2023. In cooperation with YMCA Revúca, the PP implement the Teahouse activity, which is focused on low-threshold activities. It is intended for young people aged 15 and over it is an open activity. Currently, the goal of the PP and their partners is to identify the needs and interests of young people, to which they will respond in the future. Also the discussion on future long-term cooperation with the Norwegian partner is on the table. The goal of the project's activities is to create a safe and stimulating space for

children. All activities are implemented in a low-threshold manner in order to eliminate obstacles that prevent young people from participating in the planned activities. This is the similar element of all the projects.

As it was mentioned in the previous Annual Programme Reports, it could be seen that the concept of multifunctional centre for youth as the idea of a structure of centres working with children and youth with a clear and coherent vision of working with children and youth on a given territory has been difficult to grasp by the PPs. Notwithstanding, it was the start point and now we can see the progress in people's thinking for further cooperation and perception of the centre as a structure/network of cooperating organizations with aim of local/regional development, which the further activities can be built on.

As there are only 8 projects supported the target value of two indicators will not be met (Number of multifunctional youth centres established or supported, Number of projects implemented in multi-level and/or multi-stakeholder local partnerships).

The target values of all others indicators are going to be achieved or overachieved. Expectations of the PO in this regard were low and it is great that the PPs and their partners could provide their services to so many people and involve such a high number of municipalities and other entities.

Due to cancelled project LDI01002 there was a reallocation from outcome 1 to outcome 3 in amount of EUR 260 000.

In 2023, two calls for additional funds for already implemented projects were launched. The aim of the 1st call launched in April was to financially assist the PPs to cope with the current economic challenges of extraordinary price increases caused by external factors through no fault of the PPs themselves. There were 5 projects submitted and supported.

The aim of the 2nd call launched in June was to allow PPs to carry out additional activities, including expansions or continuation of existing activities; that contribute to the objective of their project. Only one project from this outcome was supported – LDI01003 (Municipality Spišská Belá). However, the additional funds were meant for infrastructures/equipment, no additional soft activities.

At the end of 2023 there has been identified an issue with the public procurement on the construction work in LDI01006, which have already been completed. It is a subject of the communication with the Audit Authority and if the findings are confirmed it can mean that about EUR 800 000 will not be eligible.

Outcome 2: Social inclusion of marginalized Roma communities enhanced

Within the Outcome 2 17 projects are being implemented, 7 out of them under the small grant scheme. Under the LDI02 call initially 6 projects were approved and contracted, after the reallocation in 2022 from the Outcome 1 (because of lack of the projects in good quality under LDI01 call) by more than 1.5 mil. EUR further 4 projects could be supported. The last project from the reserve list (LDI02029 EduRoma) was concluded in February 2023.

On the other hand, the final decision on the project LDI02013 (Municipality Betlanovce) - withdrawal from the Project Contract - was made by the PO at the beginning of 2023. The PP had not started with the implementation of the project and there was not enough time for their successful implementation.

Based on this it was decided that the available and released funds, including funds from the LDI02013, project would be reallocated from the Programme in amount of EUR 1 400 000. The adjusted Memorandum of Understanding on implementation of Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 is effective from 17 February 2023.

Based on the successful project applications it seems that except for the indicators Number of projects applying an integrated approach (i.e. addressing more than one thematic area of intervention among health, education, employment, housing and non-discrimination components) and Number of multi-stakeholder partnerships established or supported the target values of all indicators will be achieved or overachieved. The reason for overachievement is low expectations of the PO and for the underachievement not enough projects supported. As regards the partnership, the PO decided to count just one multi-stakeholder partnership by project to use the same way of counting for all the projects.

Based on the Financial Mechanism Office the PO has communicated the indicator Number of joint activities between Roma and non-Roma with the PPs of the projects LDI03021 and LDI03023 in which the target values of this indicator were very high in comparison with other projects and PO's expectations. The reason was the most of those activities were of the same kind. The PO agreed with the PPs on the assessment based on the kind of activity, not all its repetitions.

All the projects have already conducted the survey focused on majority population in intervention area accepting Roma. The survey has been conducted by the PPs before the implementation of relevant activities. The baseline value is 31.41% of the majority population in the area of intervention. The achieved value will be measured after the implementation of the relevant activities by the PPs.

The implementation of the survey by the PPs did not run smoothly. For the data collection method, the questionnaire sent from the FMO has been used. The questionnaire caused quite a stir in some municipalities and communities by its questions. Moreover, within the project LDI02028 it happen that they use their own questionnaire. The PO is in touch with PP to set up the available assessment of the survey to get the results, which could be accepted for the indicator. For the future, the PO recommends running such survey by the Financial Mechanism Office for all the Programmes relevant.

As regards some other indicators, which require disaggregation by Roma the PO has also been notified that the Slovak legislation (since 2021) prohibits the collection of ethnic data, especially by state authorities. So not all the organizations involved in the projects agree with this disaggregation.

The PO appreciates a lot the work of NGOs in the area of Roma intervention. They immediately started with the activities and applying the good practices and measures, which help the Roma, inclusion and empowerment directly at local level in Roma communities with Roma people.

The PO sees a great potential for cooperation of the NGOs with municipalities. Based on the partial results of the projects it can be seen that systematic approach is necessary from the top to the bottom. On the other hand, equally necessary are the local initiatives and multiplication of good practices of the NGOs from the bottom to the top. The activities focused in Roma women, gender equality and their empowerment (LDI03022 Carpathian Foundation, LDI03021 Association for Culture, Education and Communication), carrier counselling and communication with the employers (LDI03017 Agency of Labour for Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region, LDI03023 People in need) and self-help construction activities with the connected activities need to be highlighted.

The activities of the PPs under Outcome 2 have also been supported by two calls for additional funds. Within the 1st call related to the price increase one project has been supported. Within the 2nd call 7 additional activities contributing to the objective of the programme were approved.

Outcome 3: Capacity of schools for inclusive education enhanced

Within Outcome 3 the Pre-defined Project LDIPP001 "Innovative education of teachers to increase their intercultural competences in the education process of Roma pupils" of the PP National Institute of Education and Youth is being implemented.

The project involved 258 teachers and expert staff and 80 educational organizations across Slovakia. This is an increase of 35 educational organizations compared to the previous year. As part of their development, they have implemented action plans focusing on building inclusive school environments for all and supporting the teaching of the Roma language. Teachers and expert staff prepared and implemented new lessons with pupils, new project lessons in both in-school and out-of-school environments, preceded by innovations in school curricula and a change in the approach of school management.

Due to the pandemic, there were time deviations in the implementation of educational activities in face-to-face format, even though some of them have been implemented in online environment. The individual face-to-face activities such as Slovak Academy, study visit in Oslo, innovative training "Intercultural Education in Schools with Pupils from Roma Communities", international workshops in Oslo were postponed to 2023. The project indicators and milestones were mostly met.

Extension of the project by the new initiatives, including an increase in the project budget by EUR 260 000 was approved in summer 2023. New initiatives are focused on (1) training of teachers and expert staff in the field of holocaust, (2) capacity building of Roma language teachers in educational organizations, (3) management training in Oslo and (4) digitization of teaching materials. The first initiative was implemented at the International Centre for Education on Auschwitz and the Holocaust (20 participants deepened their knowledge on the topic and expanded their competences on how to work with the topic in a school environment). The graduates directly use the acquired knowledge and experience in lessons, discussions and school projects, and thus put the protection of and respect for fundamental human rights at the forefront of the pupils' and teachers' attention. This also promotes a safe school environment for all. The initiative related to capacity building of Roma language teacher

involves 10 Roma language teachers and creates the opportunities for Roma children to learn their mother tongue respecting their right to be educated in their mother tongue. There are only 5 schools in Slovakia that allow Roma children to learn the Roma language. Those are private schools. With this activity, the possibility to provide such education to Roma children have been expanded to 9 other educational organizations. It is important for these children to be able to identify who they are. At the same time, it is important for them to improve their knowledge of Roma language, as it helps them to improve their linguistic competences in the Slovak language and consequently in further education. Other initiatives are planned for 2024.

The most important results achieved so far are the following:

- Training of teachers and expert staff to be able to work more effectively with Roma children during lessons, i.e. to be able to understand the needs of Roma children through their cultural and linguistic specificities.
- Training of Roma language teachers who teach the Roma language in 9 educational organizations.
- Developing a unique set of publications focusing on the Roma language, Roma culture and history, which will be provided free of charge to schools in electronic and printed form.
- Establishment of a network of schools (kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) in which the Roma language, Roma history and culture and/or the themes of human rights and democratic citizenship have been implemented (80 educational organizations, 258 teachers and expert staff).
- Establishment of a good partnership with the European Wergelend Centre and the Norwegian organization Roma House (Romano kher).

Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme

In 2023 Using of the Bilateral Fund at the Programme level in amount of EUR 75 000 € (based on the Memorandum of Understanding on NFM) was reconsidered and agreed. The division is as follows: EUR 15 000 for Participation in international meetings/events, and EUR 60 000 for Study Trip for the PPs in and their Norwegian partners or other representatives from Norway - bilateral activity on multifunctional youth centres, organised by the PO and the Council of Europe (CoE), including workshop or conference on sharing experience and good practise. The study trip is planned in 2024 to the Youth Centre with CoE's label in Budapest.

At the beginning of June 2023 the PO actively participated in the Meeting of the POs in Bulgaria. It was a first opportunity for the POs within the area to meet in person and to exchange their best practices, lessons learned, as well as present their Local Development programmes.

Within the bilateral relationships, the PO hosted the delegation from Romania, the PO Romanian Social Development Fund and their Norwegian partner the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

The visit was an opportunity for exchange on policy and measures for enhanced Roma inclusion. It has also provided a learning opportunity for POs on how Slovakia/Romania in their programmes on Local development, Poverty Reduction and Roma Inclusion, has approached the issues with which results. The representatives of the Romania and Norway visited 6 projects.

The both meetings/trips was attended also by the representative of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR on Roma communities, which was highly appreciated by the participants.

The Programme also contributes to strengthening of bilateral relations between the donor and beneficiary countries by the very good cooperation with the Norwegian Kingdom Embassy to Slovakia (in Bratislava, later in Vienna), IPO (CoE), PO, including the section of regional development and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the SR on Roma communities (the members of the Cooperation Committee). In 2023, three Cooperation Committee's meetings were held (one online - to review the APR 2022 and discuss on status of the Programme, one per rollam by writing procedure – review of the call for additional fund and one in person). The Cooperation Committee members and observers provided advice and reflections in the meetings; monitored the progress in the Programme and provided strategic advice on Roma inclusion and local development and support to the Programme. The face-to-face meeting was held back to back the Roundtable discussion on Roma Inclusion organized by the NFP and FMO in October 2023. The site visits of the projects were a much-appreciated part of the meeting. During 1.5 days, the participants visited 5 projects.

In the Programme, there are 15 projects with a Norwegian partner. In 2023, there was communicated an issue with the Norwegian partner Newschool. They have been a partner in three projects (LDI01003, LDI01008 and LDI02012). The PO was informed by the PPs that the Norwegian partner Newschool has been closing down their activities as of June 30, 2023. For LDI01003 it was possible to complete the agreed activities. The Norwegian partner developed a questionnaire monitoring the needs of teachers in the town of Spišská Belá and a proposal for a course to strengthen the skills of teachers in the field of cooperation and leadership using interactive learning to increase the involvement of students in the teaching process, leading to the improvement of their study results. The same situation was for the LDI01008 project, in which the cooperation and activities were of high interest. The joint activity Teach me how to teach has been assessed as the activity that brought new horizons to the implementation of work with youth. During the workshops held it was shown that the teachers involved in the projects learned to effectively communicate with each other, as well as with children and youth. For LDI02012 project only part of the activities has been possible to implement, including study trip to Norway.

A good example of bilateral cooperation is within the project of the Municipality Jelšava (LDI01009), in which the Norwegian partner Acting for Climate spent the whole August in Jelšava with their activities, when they developed field and community work with youth and young people in Jelšava. They also agreed on residency in March 2024 and started discussion on setting of the long-term cooperation after the end of the project.

The Norwegian partner Stiftelsen Mangfold i Arbeidslivet contributes by its experience in the LDI03017 project, as well. During the study trip in Norway, the PP (Agency for Labour of the Banská Bystrica Self-governing Region) became familiar with examples of good practice in the employment of disadvantaged groups of population through affirmative action and targeted programs, as well as in the field of diversity management.

C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Monitorings carried out

In 2023, the rules for the monitoring were adjusted in the Management system of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the program period 2014 – 2021:

1. each project with a total eligible expenditure of more than 3 million euros must be monitored at least once a year, while the first and last year of implementation may not be counted;
2. each project with total eligible expenditure less than or equal to 3 million euro must be monitored at least once every two years of implementation, at an appropriate time;
3. projects with total eligible expenditures lower than or equal to 1 million euros, they are selected based on the sample by the PO.

Based on this the plan of monitoring has been adjusted. The most of the projects were a subject to the regular monitoring within the previous years. For the projects LDI02016 the compliance monitoring and LDI03021, LDI03023, and LDI02029 the results monitoring started in 2023. The monitoring reports have not been concluded, yet. No significant findings have been identified. All the monitored projects are headed for successful completion by the end of April 2024.

In 2024, no regular projects monitoring is planned. The monitorings from 2023 and their reports will be completed. In case of need ad hoc monitoring will be carried out. Monitoring based on the project interim reports takes place continuously, in principle in 4-month periods.

2. Evaluations carried out

The evaluation of the programme was not carried out by the PO. The National Focal Point (NFP) carried out the risks monitoring of the LDI Programme at the end of 2022 and at the beginning of 2023. The NFP informed the FMO about the result, which was good. The recommendation was to regularly monitor projects where there has been a change/update in the schedule as well as projects where the PO has identified problems with public procurement.

In connection with the results of the 2022 municipal elections, the risk related to the replacement of statutory representatives in the projects has been identified and confirmed by the PO. The PO managed to mitigate the risk through intensive communication with the new statutory representatives of the municipalities in the projects concerned.

In spring 2023, the Management and Control System Audit was carried out by the KPMG based on the request of the FMO. Some non-fundamental deficiencies were identified related to: the update of the public procurement thresholds in the DDMACS, recommendation to make the first ex-ante control mandatory for large and/or complex procurements, clarification of the requirement and procedure on completing financial verification workpapers that support the control checklist, setting of the first ex-ante control by the PO for procurements as mandatory, absence of a clear design and procedure on financial verification workpapers that support the verification control checklist, completion of the

monitoring reports. All the relevant and appropriate recommendations were taken into account and adopted.

Evaluation of the programme is planned by the National Focal Point in 2024.

D. ANNEXES

- 1. Results achieved**
- 2. Communication summary**
- 3. Project summary and call details**
- 4. Risk management**
- 5. Monitoring plan**
- 6. Evaluation report**
- 7. Agreement conditions**

Annex 1: Results achieved

Objective: Strengthened social and economic cohesion								
Outcome 1: Social and economic development of the least developed districts strengthened								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of jobs created	Cumulative number	0	19 (APR 2022)	-	-	23	20	The target value has been achieved.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	12	-	-	15	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	7	-	-	8	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Age</i>								
<i>Children and youth (0-17)</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Young adults (18-29)</i>	-	-	7	-	-	6	-	-
<i>Adults (30-64)</i>	-	-	12	-	-	17	-	-
<i>Elderly (65+)</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
Number of municipalities with increased capacity to offer multiple extracurricular activities to children and youth	Cumulative number	0	16 (APR 2022)	-	-	21	10	It was expected that more municipalities will be involved in the cooperation related to the multifunctional centre for youth. There are 9 projects implemented.
Number of people at risk of poverty using services provided by the supported youth centres	Cumulative number	0	3,829 (IFR 2023)	-	-	5,037	1,500	The projects are being implemented. About 5 500 people at risk of poverty are supposed to use the services of youth centres.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	1,991	-	-	2,593	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	1,838	-	-	2,444	-	-

<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
Age								
<i>Children and youth (0-17)</i>	-	-	2,660	-	-	3,732	-	-
<i>Young adults (18-29)</i>	-	-	588	-	-	676	-	-
<i>Adults (30-64)</i>	-	-	581	-	-	629	-	-
<i>Elderly (65+)</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
Roma								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	2,954	-	-	3,542	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	875	-	-	1,495	-	-

Output 1.1: Services and infrastructure for children and youth provided

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of multifunctional youth centres established or supported	Cumulative number	0	8 (IFR 2023)	-	-	8	9	8 projects with multifunctional youth centre are supported.
Number of legal entities involved in the projects	Cumulative number	0	57 (IFR 2023)	-	-	60	30	Organizations involved in the projects as project promoters, project partners and cooperating entities.
Number of projects implemented in multi-level and/or multi-stakeholder local partnerships	Cumulative number	0	8 (IFR 2023)	-	-	8	9	8 projects supported
Number of field social workers and/or Roma mediators cooperating with the Youth Centres	Cumulative number	0	23 (IFR 2023)	-	-	25	20	In some projects more than two field workers and/or Roma mediators are involved.
Average increase of time (in hours per week) the centre is open for children and youth	Average	0	9 (APR 2022)	-	-	12	8	It is expected that the centres will be open by about 25 hours longer per week in average. Based on data from PP, centre

								are open 99 hours longer, which is 12,37 hours more on average.
Outcome 2: Social inclusion of marginalized Roma communities enhanced								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Share of majority population in intervention area accepting Roma	Percentage	TBD, TBD	-	-	-	-	(+25%)	31,41% - the result reported to the FMO in January 2024 covered by 15 projects. One project used a different questionnaire and its result cannot be counted. The methodology of the project promoter is not clear, it is solved with the project promoter.
Number of Roma people using supported services	Cumulative number	0	3,178 (APR 2022)	-	-	5,129	4,000	16 projects implemented
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	1,870	-	-	2,743	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	1,308	-	-	2,334	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	52	-	-
<i>Age</i>								
<i>Children and youth (0-17)</i>	-	-	1,733	-	-	2,279	-	-
<i>Young adults (18-29)</i>	-	-	819	-	-	1,156	-	-
<i>Adults (30-64)</i>	-	-	626	-	-	1,570	-	-
<i>Elderly (65+)</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	124	-	-
Share of people living in the marginalised Roma communities in project intervention area receiving services	Percentage	N/A	12.28 % (APR 2022)	7,725	40,139	19.25 %	20.00 %	16 projects implemented

Output 2.1: Services to Marginalised Roma Communities provided								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of projects applying an integrated approach (i.e. addressing more than one thematic area of intervention among health, education, employment, housing and non-discrimination components)	Cumulative number	0	16 (IFR 2023)	-	-	16	18	The target value will not be achieved, as only 16 projects are supported. 9 projects (call LDI02) and 7 projects (LDI03)
Number of joint activities between Roma and non-Roma	Cumulative number	0	347 (IFR 2023)	-	-	58	36	Two projects with extremely high target value have been consulted and the number of the activities adjusted based on the number of different kinds of activities.
Number of marginalised Roma communities with investments into public infrastructure reducing disparities between Roma and non-Roma	Cumulative number	0	13 (IFR 2023)	-	-	17	10	Within 6 projects. The projects' activities are implemented for more MRCs.
Number of Roma people working in the centres	Cumulative number	0	83 (IFR 2023)	-	-	91	50	More Roma people are working in the centres.
Number of marginalized Roma communities provided with services	Cumulative number	0	73 (IFR 2023)	-	-	80	24	The projects' activities are implemented for more MRCs.
Output 2.2: Capacities of organisations active in the social inclusion of marginalised Roma communities increased								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		

Number of entities / actors active in the social inclusion of marginalised Roma communities supported	Cumulative number	0	73 (IFR 2023)	-	-	82	40	More entities are involved in the projects.
Number of good practices replicated in marginalised Roma communities	Cumulative number	0	33 (IFR 2023)	-	-	39	20	-
Number of multi-stakeholder partnerships established or supported	Cumulative number	0	16 (IFR 2023)	-	-	16	18	Some of the projects count individual partnerships. To use the same way for all the projects one multistakeholder partnership is counted per project. There are 16 projects in Roma component.
Outcome 3: Capacity of schools for inclusive education enhanced								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of educational institutions that have implementing curricula on Romani language or culture	Cumulative number	80	86 (APR 2022)	-	-	106	105	The list of the educational institutions is updated regularly by the project promoter.
Number of schools applying inclusive education models	Cumulative number	17	43 (APR 2022)	-	-	66	60	20 action plans (20 schools), 65 lessons (29 schools).
Output 3.1: Children and youth with a Roma background empowered								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of textbooks and methodological materials integrating Roma history and language for	Cumulative number	0	0 (IFR 2023)	-	-	0	11,500	The materials are finalized before their issue.

teaching staff and pupils of primary and secondary schools distributed								
Number of kindergarten, primary and secondary teachers working with Roma children trained in innovative education practices	Cumulative number	0	65 (IFR 2023)	-	-	65	80	There are 19 new applicants. The target value will be achieved.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	51	-	-	51	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	14	-	-	14	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	11	-	-	11	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	54	-	-	54	-	-
Number of school administration/management staff working with Roma children trained in innovative education practices	Cumulative number	0	80 (IFR 2023)	-	-	80	80	The target value has been achieved.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	69	-	-	69	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	11	-	-	11	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	9	-	-	9	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	71	-	-	71	-	-
Number of Romani language teacher candidates prepared for the state language examination	Cumulative number	0	13 (IFR 2023)	-	-	13	10	The target value has been achieved. There are 13 graduates of the training and 9 graduates of the state exam.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	9	-	-	9	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	4	-	-	4	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								

<i>Roma</i>	-	-	12	-	-	12	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Number of multipliers/trainers trained in Education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and Human rights education (HRE)	Cumulative number	0	18 (IFR 2023)	-	-	18	10	The target value has been achieved. 10 certificates - general education issued, 8 certificates - advanced education issued.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	13	-	-	13	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	5	-	-	5	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	15	-	-	15	-	-
Number of professional staff trained in Education for democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights education (HRE)	Cumulative number	0	60 (IFR 2023)	-	-	60	60	The target value has been achieved.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	55	-	-	55	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	5	-	-	5	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	60	-	-	60	-	-
Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States	Scale 1-7	6.47, Survey carried out by	6.47 (APR 2022)	-	-	6.47	4.50, Target is ≥4.5, and an increase	-

		the FMO.					on the baseline value	
Level of satisfaction with the partnership	Scale 1-7	6.50, Survey carried out by the FMO.	6.50 (APR 2022)	-	-	6.50	4.50, Target is ≥4.5, and an increase on the baseline value	-
Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership	Percentage	N/A	-	-	-	-	50.00 %, Target is minimum 50 %	According to Core Indicator Guidance, the FMO collects data.
Bilateral Output 1: Cooperation between Donor and Beneficiary State entities supported								
Indicator	Unit of measurement	Baseline value	Previous achievement value	Achievements until end of December 2023			Target value	Comment
				Numerator	Denominator	Achievement value		
Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner	Cumulative number	0	15 (IFR 2023)	-	-	15	15	There are 15 projects with a donor project partner.
Number of pedagogical staff participating in the “Oslo” Study visit	Cumulative number	0	60 (IFR 2023)	-	-	60	60	There are 10 Romas and other are Non-Romas.
<i>Gender</i>								
<i>Female</i>	-	-	48	-	-	48	-	-
<i>Male</i>	-	-	12	-	-	12	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
<i>Roma</i>								
<i>Roma</i>	-	-	10	-	-	10	-	-
<i>Not specified</i>	-	-	50	-	-	50	-	-

Annex 2: Communication summary

1. Best projects

One of the best examples in the call LDI02 is project LDI02015 INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

The main goal of the project is to improve the quality life of people from marginalised Roma communities through measures in basic areas of life such as housing, employment and education. This is achieved by providing assistance in self-help construction of family houses.

During the implementation Project Promoter, who is the Projekt DOM.ov, work with clients in the Košice region, focusing on areas such as Kecerovce, Vtáčkovce, Bôrka, Veľká Ida, Boliarov and Trebišov. The clients are individuals from marginalised Roma communities who are at risk of generational poverty. Due to difficult life situation, they have low level of education, inadequate housing and significant part of them is unemployed.

The Project Promoter systematically cooperates with the clients to secure housing. At the beginning, clients receive financial literacy training. After fulfilling the condition of regular savings for at least 12 months, they can apply for a part of the micro-loan to buy land from the municipality, which will ensure the legality of the buildings. Another part of the micro-loan is provided for building materials. The total amount of the micro-loan is EUR 18 000. The project clients regularly participate in training programmes to help them enter the labour market. In cooperation with project staff and instructors, they gradually build their own low-cost houses.

Achieving their own housing means better conditions for children to prepare for school and provides better opportunities for parents to find employment—which is a bullet point in breaking the cycle of generational poverty that particularly affects people from marginalized Roma communities.

The municipality of Kecerovce was visited by the President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Čaputová in spring 2023. She came to support people who are project clients and they are buildings family houses by their own.

<https://www.prezident.sk/article/prezidentka-ocenila-projekt-vystavby-domov-v-kecerovciach/>

The project promoter organized an information day in September 2023, which was also attended by the Programme Operator. The event was attended by representatives of neighbouring towns and municipalities, project partners, workers of regional centres and representatives of Roma communities. During the event, the results of the project were presented, which showed positive experiences and good practice to many participants, as well as

how the issue of generational poverty in marginalised Roma communities can be solved through education, cooperation and opportunity for development.

In the year 2023, a total of 12 homes were successfully completed and approved. At the end of 2023, a total of 17 houses are under construction in the three municipalities.

<https://komercespravny.pravda.sk/charita-a-csr/clanok/666279-neziskova-organizacia-projekt-dom-ov-ma-ambiciu-menit-komunity/>

One of the best examples in the call LDI03 is project LDI03023 DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND CAREER COUNSELING FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

The Project Promoter is the non-profit organization People in Need. The main goal of the project is to increase the social inclusion of children from marginalized Roma communities and also to improve the provision of community services. The need to strengthen the education of children from marginalised Roma communities stems from the standardised education system, which does not take into account the environment from which the children come, and thus often contributes to early school leaving and loss of interest in continuing secondary or higher education, thus leading them into a vicious circle of social exclusion and poverty.

The Project Promoter provided several different activities for people from marginalised Roma communities. One of them was the provision of career counselling especially for children and youth. The activity has been developed into a separate school subject, which is "Preparation for a profession" and is implemented by the Petrovany Primary School. At the same time, a number of schools have also expressed interest in this subject.

The Project Promoter also provided digital skills development to children from marginalised Roma communities in each Community Centre on a weekly basis. This activity was a great success among the children and youth who participated in it. The clients acquired skills that are essential in today's digital age for any further education or future employment. At the same time, a methodological guide was developed to help other tutors with working with children in marginalised Roma communities.

The project also cooperates with the Norwegian organisation Fretex Pluss. The cooperation with the donor partner has inspired the project recipient in the methodology of working with at-risk youth in career counselling. The project beneficiary in turn showed the Norwegian partner how to work with volunteers.

Within the project, three methodological manuals for working with children and youth have been published, which can be used in community centres.

[Career Counselling: Service Methodology](#)

[Methodology for Working with Volunteers](#)

[Methodological Guide for the Implementation of Digital Skills](#)

In September 2023, the Project Promoter organised a closing conference, which was also attended by the Programme Operator. The conference was attended by the local partners and representatives of Fretex Pluss. Good experiences and practices were presented at the conference, showing that children from Roma communities only need patience, support and opportunities to develop.

<https://karierove-poradenstvo.clovekvohrozeni.sk/we-showed-roma-children-that-education-is-the-way-to-employment/>

2. Visibility of the Grants and the Donors

2.a. Communication activities

The Programme Operator proceeds in line with the Communication plan for the Programme Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Roma inclusion. The Programme Operator communicates its dissemination and publicity activities with the Press Department of the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic. Through the web site <https://www.eeagrants.sk/> and Facebook profile <https://www.facebook.com/EEANorwayGrants/> the Programme Operator communicates statistical evaluation of the calls, the results of the calls and projects supported with public. The Programme Operator also published a complex list of the submitted applications and their results.

2.b. Project stories

Webpage <https://www.eeagrants.sk/en/programs/local-development-and-inclusion/projects/> contains the comprehensive information about all projects including the information in a nutshell, project description and other information about the project.

Activities on social media, precisely the Facebook page, in the Program LDI for the year 2023 focused on presenting individual projects either their conferences, seminars or other events and news. Overall, the LDI Program has earned a number of posts on Facebook (12), likes (159), comments (3)

and shares (12) and had a significant reach of posts (4637) to individuals. The most liked post was the report about the visit of the project „Inclusive neighborhoods“ LDIO2015 and its reached the most audience (1606) and resharing (6). The Local development and inclusion Program webpage, www.norwaygrants.sk/ldi , is a subpage of the national single web page operated in Slovak and English. Within this page, four article was dedicated to the LDI Program regarding the Calls LDIDP and LDIDP2 and also their results.

3. Media coverage

https://www.teraz.sk/import/clovek-v-ohrozenipo-dvoch-rokoch-skon/745760-clanok.html?utm_source=teraz&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=click&utm_content=.%253BImport%253Bimg

<https://spravy.rtv.slovakia.sk/2023/09/zbavili-sa-dlhov-nasetrili-a-zobrali-si-uver-nasledovali-roky-svojpomocnej-vystavby-aby-mali-vlastne-legalne-byvanie/>

<https://www.kosiceonline.sk/prezidentka-podporila-ludi-ktori-celia-generacnej-chudobe>

4. Website and social media

Link to programme website		Total number of page views in the reporting year	
https://www.eeagrants.sk/		16315	
	Link or account handle	Number of posts published in the reporting year	Number of followers
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/EEANorwayGrants/	12	1819

5. Visuals

https://www.eelibrary.org/asset/39296/Learning%20how%20to%20use%20Microsoft%20Word%20properly%20%28MRC%29?returnTo=%2F%3Funding_period%3D2014-2021%26page%3D1%26Country%3D118%26Programmes%3DRoma%2520Inclusion%2520and%2520Empowerment%26sDateBetween%3D1704754800000!1705445999999&breadcrumbType=menu

https://www.eealibrary.org/asset/39959/IMG_20230221_150209_182?returnTo=%2F%3FFunding_period%3D2014-2021%26page%3D1%26Programmes%3DLocal%2520Development%2520and%2520Poverty%2520Reduction%26Country%3D118%26Country%3D102%26sDateBetween%3D1705100400000!1705791599999&breadcrumbType=menu

https://www.eealibrary.org/asset/39968/received_957762695391982?returnTo=%2F%3FFunding_period%3D2014-2021%26page%3D1%26Programmes%3DLocal%2520Development%2520and%2520Poverty%2520Reduction%26Country%3D118%26Country%3D102%26sDateBetween%3D1705100400000!1705791599999&breadcrumbType=menu

https://www.eealibrary.org/asset/39625/%C2%A9ACEC_Misia1000-babica_aktivit%C5%A5mi%20v%20ter%C3%A9ne?returnTo=%2F%3FFunding_period%3D2014-2021%26page%3D2%26Programmes%3DLocal%2520Development%2520and%2520Poverty%2520Reduction%26Country%3D118%26Country%3D102%26sDateBetween%3D1705100400000!1705791599999&breadcrumbType=menu

Annex 3: Project summary and call details

1. Project summary

	Number	Total Grant	Amount budgeted to dpps (estimate)
Total number of projects contracted	25	€ 14,843,407	€ 520,529
Number of pre-defined projects contracted	1	€ 1,560,000	€ 55,410
Number of projects with a donor project partner	15	€ 10,185,952	€ 520,529
Number of projects with a donor project partner Norway	15	€ 10,185,952	€ 520,529
Number of projects with a donor project partner Iceland	0	€ 0	€ 0
Number of projects with a donor project partner Liechtenstein	0	€ 0	€ 0

2. Call details

Call title	Outcome(s)	Call amount	Submission deadline	Number of applications received	Grant amount applied for	Grant demand %	Number of applications approved for funding	Grant amount awarded	Number of projects contracted	Amount contracted
Local development, poverty reduction and Roma inclusion (LDI01)	Outcome 1	€ 7,700,000	30/11/2020	20	€ 16,209,549	210.51 %	10	€ 6,068,911	9	€ 5,607,758
Local development, poverty reduction and Roma inclusion (LDI02)	Outcome 2	€ 6,000,000	15/01/2021	32	€ 21,400,000	356.67 %	6	€ 6,453,399	9	€ 6,227,857
SGS Local development, poverty reduction and Roma inclusion (LDI03)	Outcome 2	€ 1,247,059	01/03/2021	20	€ 3,700,000	296.70 %	7	€ 1,133,802	7	€ 1,447,792

Annex 4: Risk management

Risk description	Likelihood (1-4)	Consequence (1-4)	Risk score	Planned response in 2024
Sustainability and cost-effectiveness of implemented measures	2 medium low	3 medium high	2.45	The PO monitors the measures implemented. This is planned also for the sustainability period.
Lack of commitment of Project Promoters, including insufficient PPs' experience	2 medium low	3 medium high	2.45	The PO monitors the implementation of the projects through the project reports, phone calls, e-mails and visits. In case there is a need of further support the PO will initiate involvement of the guarantor to the project implementation who will take auspices over the Project, oversee the quality of services provided, contribute to the Strategy of working with children and youth and report his or her finding to the PO. In case of statutory representant's change the PO is in touch with the PP.
Lack of interest and/or motivation of end beneficiaries to participate on project activities.	2 medium low	2 medium low	2.00	The PO monitors the projects implementation and communicates about the challenges regarding the interest and motivation of the beneficiaries.
Misconception of notions (indicators, methodology of calculations, conditions etc.)	2 medium low	2 medium low	2.00	The PO is in touch with the project promoters and provides them with guidance. There is Guidelines published, which includes definitions of notions. Most frequent questions asked are published with their answers on the programme website.
Delays in schedule such as delays of construction works due to weather conditions, problems with the supplier, delays in public procurement etc.	2 medium low	3 medium high	2.45	The PO monitors the projects activities with special concern related to the construction works. Milestones are subject to the PO's verification within the project interim reports. The PO accepts delays caused by force majeure. The planned timeline of postponed activities is required to be submitted by the PPs and

				measures with the particular steps to mitigate the delay. The PO evaluates the implementation of the projects and their spending every month.
Covid-19 impact on the Programme implementation and potential delay	1 low	2 medium low	1.41	The PO accepts delays caused by force majeure. The planned timeline of postponed activities is required to be submitted by the PPs and measures with the particular steps to mitigate the delay.
High price increase, especially in construction materials and works	1 low	2 medium low	1.41	The projects received additional funds for price increase and the transfers between the budget items are allowed in case of savings within the budget items.
Overall risk of not absorbing most financing and achieving most targets (1-4):			2.00	

Annex 5: Monitoring plan

Please note this Annex is uploaded separately and is not visible in this document. Please download and print separately if needed.

Annex 6: Evaluation report

Not Available

Annex 7: Agreement conditions

Description	Type	Tracking	Fulfilled	Date of fulfilment	Description of measures taken
1. The maximum level of funding available from the total eligible expenditure of the programme for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be 60%.	General	Continuously tracking	N/A		Based on the Project Contracts concluded and the updated Project Applications the funds for infrastructure are planned in amount of EUR 4 029 418. It is 24,8% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme. The maxim level will be met, even some transfers to infrastructure could happen at the end of the projects implementation.
2. The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that project promoters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period; • Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at 	General	Continuously tracking	N/A		This condition applies to all the projects to be supported with the infrastructure (investments) measures. The Programme Operator included relevant conditions in the Project Contract signed and to be signed and shall also follow it during the whole implementation of the Programme.

<p>least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract. 					
<p>3. For the outcome 2 indicator “Share of majority population in the intervention area accepting Roma”, where the baseline value is “to be determined” (TBD), the National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator submits to the FMO the baseline value, together with a description of the data collection method used, no later than six months after the finalisation of the selection of projects under the call for proposals within this outcome. The updated baseline value shall be agreed upon through a modification of the programme agreement.</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>One-time fulfilment</p>	<p>N/A</p>		<p>The condition is connected with the calls LDI02 and LDI03.</p> <p>In January 2024 the PO informed the FMO about the baseline 31,41%, including the materials related to the data collection method.</p> <p>One project has not been included. Due to misunderstanding they did not use the given questionnaire. Their survey will be assessed by the PO separately, once the data collection method and calculation is clarified by the PP. So far, the submitted documentation is not completed and clear. It seems that adjustments will be needed.</p>