



**EXPERT EVALUATION NETWORK  
DELIVERING POLICY ANALYSIS ON THE  
PERFORMANCE OF COHESION POLICY 2007–2013**

**TASK 2: COUNTRY REPORT ON  
ACHIEVEMENTS OF COHESION POLICY**

**SLOVAKIA**

**VERSION: FINAL  
DATE: NOVEMBER 2010**

**KAROL FRANK  
INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH – SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**A report to the European Commission  
Directorate–General Regional Policy**

## Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
SECTION 1 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT .....	4
SECTION 2 – THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED, THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO THIS AND THE POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PERIOD .....	9
SECTION 3 – EFFECTS OF INTERVENTION .....	17
SECTION 4 – EVALUATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION .....	18
SECTION 5 – CONCLUDING REMARKS – FUTURE CHALLENGES .....	24
REFERENCES.....	25
INTERVIEWS .....	26
TABLE.....	26

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional policy in Slovakia is strongly influenced by EU Cohesion Policy, as indicated in the National Strategic Reference Framework, and is dependent on the funding which it provides. The ERDF and Cohesion Fund contribution to regional policy is crucial to helping the regions lagging behind to catch up with the more developed regions. Without EU funding national regional policy would lack the necessary resources for financing the majority of projects. Progress in physical and financial implementations in the present programming period varies across operational programmes. There were delays initially, but these are being slowly eliminated and the rate of implementation is gradually increasing in the majority of programmes. The influence of the financial and economic crisis on the national cohesion policy was minimal. The structure of the operational programmes and the priorities remained basically unchanged in terms of financial allocation and the priorities pursued. The output and results from the expenditure undertaken in regions receiving EU support is concentrated on R&D support for universities, the Institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and non-profit scientific bodies, transport infrastructure, investment in education infrastructure and support for enterprises in various industries. Innovative measures such as innovation vouchers and centres of competences are only in a pilot stage of implementation. The majority of financial resources related to enterprise support are spent on purchasing new machinery, licences and improvement of production processes. Funding of public R&D infrastructure, networks of excellence and knowledge transfer create the necessary foundation for further implementation of more sophisticated innovative measures in the future by steadily improving the (still low) Slovak innovation performance.

The effect of the funding received on the development of the regions supported and on the development of the economy generally will need to wait for a later date before it can be properly assessed. Although, this report is based on data on physical and financial progress as at the end of 2009, it is possible to conclude that the present increase in commitments and certified eligible expenditure will provide significant positive stimuli for the economy on national and regional level.

The general conclusion is that the evaluations examined provide appropriate assistance for managing authorities to improve the system of implementation. Those carried out more recently focus on administration, financial management, the rate of physical and financial implementation and on improving the existing measurable indicators. In Slovakia, the main purpose of evaluations is to fine-tune the existing system for managing the Structural Funds. The quality, methodological approach, findings and recommendations of the evaluations already undertaken vary according to the area of intervention and purpose of the specific Operational Programme.

## SECTION 1 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The domestic regional policy defined in the Regional Development Strategy is focused on (Ministry of Construction, 2009):

- Development of human capital;
- Research, development and innovation;
- Basic infrastructure and services.

This Strategy is the result of recently adopted legislation relating to regional development. The Act on regional development support No. 539/2009 defined the National Regional Development Strategy which represents the cornerstone of future regional development in Slovakia (also for the post 2013 Cohesion Policy period). The Strategy is linked to regional development documents already adopted (National Strategic Reference Framework, Strategy of Spatial Development, Lisbon Strategy and other national strategic documents).

The main factors underlying the existing regional disparities are the following:

- Lack of high quality transport infrastructure, delays in construction of a motorway connection between western and eastern Slovakia;
- Existence of various types of regional-specific factors related to accessibility (eccentric position of some NUTS III regions e.g. Bratislava region versus the Prešov region);
- Institutional quality of regional administration at NUTS III and LAU level;
- Low inter-regional as well as intra-regional mobility of labour force;
- Difficult access to housing in areas providing employment opportunities;
- Environmental burdens related to previous heavy industrial activity;
- Low level of economic development in border regions, especially in the east and south of Slovakia. These regions border with similarly low developed regions of Ukraine, Poland and Hungary;
- Restructuring of “traditional” industry sectors;
- The quality of human resources (education attainment, entrepreneurial spirit);
- The increase in employment in the tertiary sector which has absorbed a significant share of the available labour force and which is concentrated in predominantly urban areas which further increases the pressure on existing infrastructure there.

The regional disparities in Slovakia are characterised by a significant west – east and north – south divide with the Bratislava region being dominant. The leading position of the latter is evident in all the main macroeconomic indicators. The region generates more than 25% of GDP. The economic structure of the region is different to the rest of the country due to the presence of the capital city. The share of employment in industry is only 14%. The majority of employment is in financial and business services (25.2%), public administration, education and

health (24.2%) (see also Table 1)<sup>1</sup>. The region is also host to the majority of research and education institutions with R&D expenditure at 0.8% of GDP in 2007.

In marked contrast with other NUTS II regions, GDP per person employed (Table A) in Bratislava is 4 percentage points above the EU 27 average. In Eastern Slovakia, it is 36% below, in Central Slovakia 37% below and in Western Slovakia, 25% below.

**Table A – GDP per person employed in PPS, EU27 = 100**

	EU27	Country	Západné Slovensko	Stredné Slovensko	Východné Slovensko	Bratislavský kraj
2000	100.0	58.1	57.8	49.9	50.7	80.0
2006	100.0	70.4	71.0	59.5	58.7	97.4
2007	100.0	75.0	74.7	62.8	63.9	103.8

Source: Eurostat

The share of urban population is significantly smaller than the EU27 average. The majority of the population lives in predominantly rural areas (50%) and in intermediate rural areas (38%). This is even more the case at NUTS III level<sup>2</sup>.

One of the major determinants of the above mentioned development of regions and existing disparities is the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI). Table B shows the share of FDI at the NUTS III level.

**Table B – Stock of FDI and regional distribution of FDI in 2007 (in EUR thousand)**

	Total EUR	Share
Slovak Republic	32,411,722	100%
Region of Bratislava	19,979,994	61.6%
Region of Trnava	3,302,559	10.2%
Region of Trenčín	1,562,993	4.8%
Region of Nitra	1,299,717	4.0%
Region of Žilina	2,221,821	6.9%
Region of Banská Bystrica	843,552	2.6%
Region of Prešov	249,094	0.8%
Region of Košice	2,951,992	9.1%

Source: own calculation based on National Bank of Slovakia data

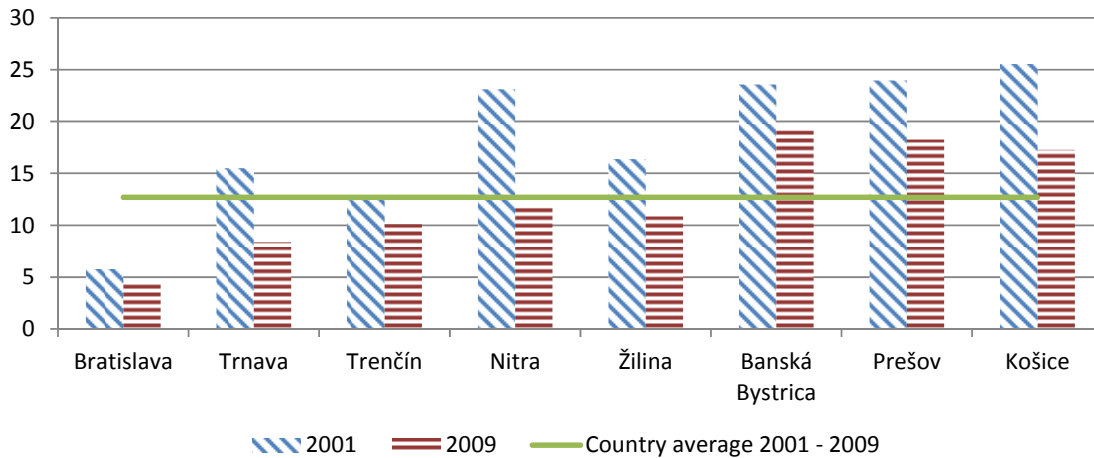
<sup>1</sup> See the Excel folder for Table 1.

<sup>2</sup> Areas are considered: Predominantly Urban, if the share of population living in local rural units is below 15%; Intermediate, if the share of population living in local rural units is between 15% and 50%; Predominantly Rural (PR), if the share of population living in local rural units is higher than 50%. Source: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/62/42392595.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/62/42392595.pdf)

Table B shows the uneven distribution of FDI with the majority of investment allocated in the Bratislava region followed by Trnava region. However, in recent years, the inflow of investment recorded in the Trnava, Trenčín and Žilina region have involved mainly the automotive and electronic industry. The eastern regions of Slovakia and Banská Bystrica are still lagging behind in attracting FDI mainly due to their undeveloped infrastructure. The region of Košice is highly dependent on the metallurgy industry (US Steel Košice).

The unemployment rate is highest in Eastern Slovakia. The disparities are even more evident at the NUTS III level (Figure 1). In 2001, the unemployment rate was, except in Bratislava, above the country average in all NUTS III regions. The inflow of FDI into the Trnava, Trenčín and Žilina regions gradually lowered the unemployment rate. The development of unemployment in Prešov and Košice region is determined by several specific factors: small inflow of FDI, difficult demographic composition of population (Roma communities) and internal disparities within the region itself. The issue of marginalised Roma communities is addressed by horizontal priorities in the NSRF. However, interventions in the past and present have not led to any significant progress in this highly sensitive area.

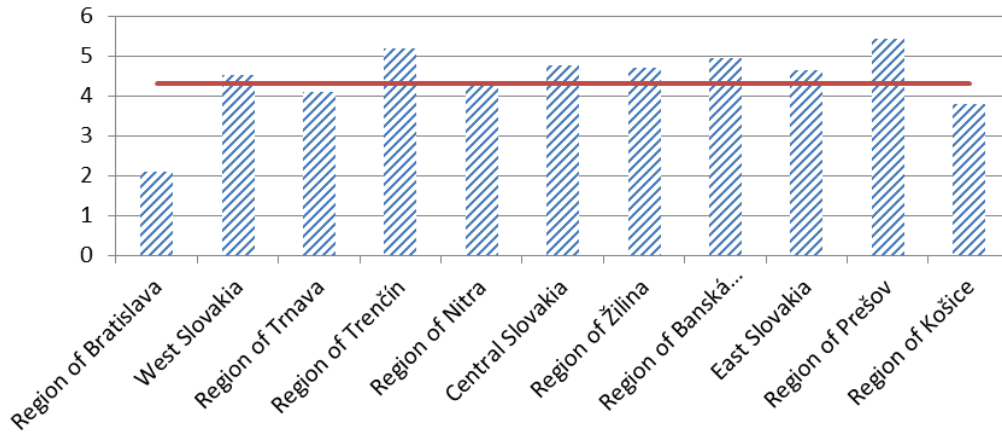
**Figure 1 – Development of registered unemployment rate in 2001 – 2009**



Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, own calculations

In 2009, the registered unemployment rate went up by 4.3 percentage points and reached 12.6% (see Figure 1 and 2). From a regional perspective, the highest annual growth of unemployment was recorded in the region of Prešov (by 5.4 percentage points), Trenčín (5.2 percentage points), Banská Bystrica (4.9 percentage points) and Žilina (4.7 percentage points).

**Figure 2 – Annual increase (2008–2009) of registered unemployment in percentage points at NUTS II and NUTS III level**



Note: Red horizontal line = annual average increase of unemployment rate in Slovakia (2008-2009)

Source: Source: Regdat database - Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, own calculations.

This sharp increase in unemployment is partly caused by the return of Slovaks from abroad who lost their jobs in other EU countries (e.g. in the UK and Ireland)<sup>3</sup>. From a sectoral perspective, the largest decline in employment was recorded in the manufacturing sector with 65,200 layoffs, and agriculture, forestry and fishing with a total loss of 11,500 jobs. The economic recovery in 2010 and beyond, with expected GDP growth at around 3–4% a year is likely only slowly to reduce unemployment.

The education attainment level is highest in the Bratislava region. The share of people aged 25–64 with tertiary education is 16 percentage points larger than the country average (Table 1). In comparison with the EU 27 average, the Slovak work force is characterised by a larger share of people with upper secondary education, which is a source of skilled manual labour.

Labour cost which are still low together with other factors represent a comparative advantage in attracting FDI, even if temporary (Table C). The development of transport infrastructure with ERDF and Cohesion Fund support would improve the accessibility of the most lagging regions so increasing employment.

<sup>3</sup> Since 2Q2008 to 2Q2009 about 1000 citizens lost their jobs in the Prešov region. Due to layoffs in EU countries the number of unemployed in the Prešov region rose by additional 16200.

**Table C – Total labour costs in NUTS III regions (EUR per hour)**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Slovak Republic	4.3	4.8	5.3	5.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	7.4
Region of Bratislava	5.5	6.2	6.7	7.7	7.2	8.0	8.5	9.2
Region of Trnava	3.9	4.3	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.9	6.8	7.2
Region of Trenčín	3.9	4.6	4.8	4.8	5.4	5.8	6.4	6.6
Region of Nitra	3.6	4.3	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.8	6.4
Region of Žilina	4.0	4.5	4.9	5.0	5.4	5.7	6.5	6.9
Region of Banská Bystrica	3.7	4.2	4.8	5.2	5.3	5.4	6.0	6.4
Region of Prešov	3.6	4.1	4.6	4.5	4.9	5.1	5.6	6.2
Region of Košice	4.5	4.9	5.5	6.0	6.2	6.7	7.2	7.7

Source: Statistical office of Slovak republic, RegStat Database

Slovakia is a small and open economy and like other EU economies has been hit by the economic and financial crisis. Table 2<sup>4</sup> shows the development of selected macroeconomic indicators in Slovakia over the period 2000–2009, together with a forecast for 2010.

The economic recession in Slovakia was caused primarily by a decline in external demand (for exports) with a negative impact on industrial production (especially in the automotive industry), a decline in construction and a decline in domestic demand. This reduction in GDP which resulted was inevitably reflected in an increase in the government budget deficit and a reduction in employment. In 2009 the general government deficit reached 7.9% of GDP due to a sharp decline in revenue (especially in personal income tax<sup>5</sup>) and an unchanged level of expenditure<sup>6</sup>. Revenue from VAT also declined to only 77.5% of the planned amount as did excise duties to 88.6%. The reduction in these two sources of revenue resulted in a loss of EUR 1.3 billion.

The decline in revenue from personal income tax, a large part of which is allocated to municipalities and self-governing regions (VÚC), resulted in a significant deterioration in the budget balances at regional level. In order to counteract this and provide regional authorities with sufficient financing, a Memorandum was agreed between regional representatives and central government<sup>7</sup>, under which over EUR 100 million was transferred from the State budget

<sup>4</sup> See Excel file for Table 2.

<sup>5</sup> The loss of revenue in personal income tax was caused by growth of unemployment and implementation of discretionary anti-crisis measures (e.g. increase of basic tax-allowance).

<sup>6</sup> The previous government refrained from implementation of austerity measures on the expenditure side of the budget, due to parliamentary elections. The budgetary consolidation is expected to be gradually implemented in 2010 and 2011.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.government.gov.sk/13565/memorandum-o-spolupraci-pri-rieseni-dopadov-financnej-a-hospodarskej-krizy-medzi-vladou-sr-a-zmos.php>



to municipalities and regions in 2009 to compensate for the loss of revenue. A similar deterioration in regional budgets is also expected in 2010.

In 2010, from May to August, several Slovak regions have been hit by floods. The flooding affected about 12,000 households in 122 cities and municipalities with total a damage on property estimated to hundreds of million EUR. In July 2010, The Slovak government submitted the application for the Solidarity Fund of the EU.

## SECTION 2 – THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED, THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO THIS AND THE POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PERIOD

### THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED

Regional policy in Slovakia in the current period is set out in the NSRF and has three strategic priorities: the development of infrastructure and regional accessibility, the knowledge economy and human resources. It covers all regions with a particular focus on those least developed in terms of innovation and centres of growth.

**Table D – Financial allocation by OP in 2007 – 2013<sup>8</sup> (in EUR)**

	Fund	Allocation	Share of total
OP Information Society	ERDF	993,095,405	8.7%
OP Environment	ERDF + Cohesion Fund	1,800,000,000	15.8%
Regional Operational Programme	ERDF	1,445,000,000	12.7%
OP Transport	ERDF + Cohesion Fund	3,206,904,595	28.2%
OP Research and Development	ERDF	1,209,415,373	10.6%
OP Health	ERDF	250,000,000	2.2%
OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth	ERDF	772,000,000	6.8%
OP Education	ESF	617,801,578	5.4%
OP Employment and Social Inclusion	ESF	881,801,578	7.8%
OP Technical Assistance	ERDF	97,601,421	0.9%
OP Bratislavský kraj	ERDF	87,000,000	0.8%
Total		11,360,619,950	100%

Source: NSRF, 2007

The priorities under the Competitiveness Objective in the Bratislava region are to develop knowledge-based activities (innovation and technology transfers and ICT, infrastructure (regeneration of towns and cities and regional and urban transport). The multi-objective OP R&D also provides support for R&D, for building R&D infrastructure and knowledge transfer.

<sup>8</sup> Before changes made under Article 17 of the Inter-institutional Agreement of 17 May 2006.

The other regions (under the Convergence Objective) are eligible for support to the enterprise environment, transport infrastructure, the environment and energy and territorial development, although with substantially larger financial allocation in the relevant Ops.

The eleven Operational Programmes outlined in the NSRF are listed in Table D. The majority of financial resources are allocated to OP Transport, Environment, Regional OP and Research and Development OP.

The regional authorities at NUTS III level formulated Strategies for Economic and Social Development for 2007 – 2013. The strategies are based on both general and specific objectives, with priorities, measures and activities aimed at achieving these objectives. The strategies are linked to the priorities outlined in the NSRF.

The financial allocation between and within policy areas reflects the objectives in the NSRF and OPs. Funding is allocated on the basis of the innovation and growth centres in the respective regions. The distribution of funds is aimed at achieving more balanced regional development. The financial allocation by main policy areas is shown in Table 3<sup>9</sup>.

EU funding represents the lion's share of financing for domestic regional policy. The adoption of the National Regional Development Strategy in 2010 can be considered as the first major effort to formulate an autonomous regional policy and provides the basis for debate on the future Cohesion Policy, as well as for updating existing regional development strategies in Slovak regions.

The influence of the financial and economic crisis on national cohesion policy was minimal. The structure of the Operational Programmes and the priorities remained basically unchanged in terms of financial allocation and the objectives pursued. The present Government is considering allocating additional financial resources for OP Transport to speed up the construction of transport networks. The major challenge comes from the deterioration in the finances of self-governing regions and municipalities which may impede the implementation of projects. Furthermore, Slovakia will receive an additional EUR 137.7 million according to calculations carried out in line with the provisions of Article 17 of the Inter-institutional Agreement of May 2006. In April 2010, the Commission adopted the Communication adjusting "the amounts allocated from funds supporting cohesion" for Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Slovak Government has already approved the division of these allocations among ROPs, OP Environment and OP Bratislava Region. The revision of these programmes is expected to be made in the near future.

---

<sup>9</sup> See Excel file for Table 3.

Slovakia is involved in four cross-border co-operation (CBC) programmes and two trans-national cooperation programmes which overall account for 2% or EUR 227 million of the EU support to Slovakia. The cross-border activities aim at supporting trans-national partnerships with Austria (EUR 60 million), Poland (EUR 157 million), Hungary (EUR 176 million) and the Czech Republic (EUR 93 million). The programmes mainly focus on the improvement of accessibility, sustainable development and environment.

## **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

The programmes are being implemented according to the Operational Programmes adopted, although with different outcomes and different degrees of success in terms of time schedules. In general, the national projects in selected OPs (OP R&D and OP Transport) are being implemented according to plan. On the other hand, the OP Information Society (OPIS) lags behind most in terms of financial implementation.

The main reasons for delay in financial implementation are specific to each OP. We can identify, however, the following common reasons for delay:

- Difficulties in public procurement;
- Preparation and approval of large projects (e.g. transport and environmental infrastructure);
- Adverse effects of the financial and economic crisis which had a differential impact on the implementation of different Ops;
- Institutional and administrative instability – changes in the competences of managing authorities and central coordination authorities;
- Delays in the financial implementation of projects (OP OPIS);
- Difficulties relating to the IT monitoring system (ITMS).

Lack of data makes it difficult to find evidence on the influence of the economic crisis on the demand for support. The data on changes in private expenditure for co-financing are not available. However, the deterioration in public finances at the regional level will probably postpone the implementation of some projects. The same can be expected in the business sector. Although the Government and regional authorities consider EU assistance a means of mitigating the adverse effects of the crisis, the lack of co-financing resources may well be an obstacle to their use (this is not the case for large national projects). Other important factors which have adversely affected the pace of implementation are changes in the competences of managing authorities implemented by the previous Government and ongoing changes being made by the current Government. The transfer of competences and responsibilities from one Ministry to another and back again, the dissolution of Ministries and their subsequent

reestablishment has significant damaging effects on the management of Cohesion Policy programmes and overall institutional stability.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMMES SO FAR**

The concern here is with the Operational Programmes. Annual Implementation Reports provide some evidence on achievements up to the end of 2009.

**Improvement in the enterprise environment** (support of traditional activities and the development of new ones, R&D and innovation, strengthening links between businesses and the research community, increased technology diffusion, development of centres of excellence, etc.) is being pursued through three Operational Programmes: Competitiveness and Economic Growth, OP Bratislavský kraj and OP Research and Development.

*The OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth (OP CEG)* had the third highest financial implementation rate (5.6% of overall allocation for the period) at the end of 2009. The OP is implementing demand-oriented projects, which as compared with demand-oriented projects are more demanding for both applicants and managing authorities. Up to 2009, a total of 307 projects had reached the implementation stage under the three Priority Axes. The majority of projects are being carried out under PA 1 – Innovation and Competitiveness Growth, and PA3 – Tourism, which both had financial implementation rates of 8.3%. Under PA1, the highest implementation rate was in the Nitra, Trnava and Žilina regions. The regions with the highest share of contracted projects were Banská Bystrica (23.7% of the total budget allocated), Prešov (23.1%) and Trnava (17.0%).

Some 239 demand oriented projects are being implemented under PA 1 and 4 projects have been completed. Support is focused on introducing innovative technologies in production, expanding productive capacity and supporting of enterprises in specific industries (e.g. photovoltaic, hydraulics, bearings, and material engineering).

*OP R&D* is focused on supporting Convergence regions as well as the Competitiveness one. At the end of 2009, financial implementation had 2.8% of allocation and contracted projects 44.1%. The most successful priority axes were PA 2 – Support for R&D with projects approved amounting to 38% of the allocation (65 projects), PA 4 – Support for R&D in the Bratislava region, with 41% of the allocation (38 projects) and PA 5 – Infrastructure of Higher Education Institutions with 45% (29 projects). Though expenditure on this OP is progressing slowly; the volume of contracted projects will lead to a rapid increase in expenditure in the next few years.

*Summary of projects by priority axe and region:*

- PA 1, PA 3 – R&D Infrastructure (in the Bratislava region): Two national projects are being implemented: Infrastructure for Supercomputing and a Data centre for R&D. The

funding recipients are the Computing Centre of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) and the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information.

- PA 2 and PA 4 – Support for R&D (In the Bratislava region):
  - 2 national projects: a National Information System for R&D Support which provides general access to electronic information sources (e.g. ProQuest Central, Knovel, ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink, and Web of Science) for universities and SAS and National Infrastructure for Support of Technology Transfer (NIIT).
  - 28 projects are being implemented under measure 2.1 Support of networks of excellence in R&D as the basis for regional development and support for international cooperation. Main beneficiaries: universities and institutes of SAS.
  - 37 projects are being implemented under measure 2.2 Transfer of knowledge and technology from R&D into practice. The activities are funded under state aid schemes for micro firms and SMEs as well as large enterprises. Main beneficiaries: enterprises, universities, non-profit R&D centres, SAS.
  - Two calls have been launched in the Bratislava region which has resulted in 17 projects being carried out under measures 4.1 and 4.2. The beneficiaries are similar to those in PA 2.
- PA 5 –Higher education infrastructure
  - 29 projects are underway focused on the modernisation of buildings and procurement of ICT in universities.

*The OP Information Society (OPIS)* has the lowest financial implementation rate (0.4%) due to the complexity of the priority axes. The main activities implemented up to end-2009 consisted of feasibility studies under all priority axes. Eight studies have been carried out under the first PA and one study under the second and third<sup>10</sup>. The main objective of the studies is to analyse the starting positions, assess the prevailing conditions and propose solutions for implementation. All studies are funded as part of PA 4 – Technical assistance.

*The OP Bratislavský kraj* has the smallest amount of resources (EUR 87 million). The OP has three priority axes – Infrastructure, Knowledge-based economy and Technical Assistance. Some 53% of resources are allocated to infrastructure and 43% to the knowledge-based economy.

---

<sup>10</sup> PA 1 – Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services. The objective is to build complex e-Government system (i.e. central online portal for public access to electronic services).

PA 2 – Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions. The objective is to provide digital access to huge amount of cultural, historical, scientific and intellectual knowledge.

In the case of PA 2 –Knowledge-based economy – 5 projects have been already completed and 4 are being implemented. Under measure 2.1, Innovation and technology transfer, three projects have been already finished. Support is focused on the purchase of innovative and progressive technologies, the introduction of quality management systems in enterprises and ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 certification. Under measure 2.2, Information society, support goes on the implementation of IT systems (e-shops, complex IT systems and computer aided manufacturing).

**Transport** is seen as a strategic priority as evidenced by having the largest financial allocation of all the Operational Programmes. The construction of high-quality transport infrastructure is an important precondition for improving access to the least developed regions so creating the basis for faster regional convergence (25% of the overall allocation being spent in Eastern Slovakia). The OP has the second highest implementation rate and includes a number of major projects (EUR 50 million or more). Funding comes mainly from the Cohesion Fund (73%), with the ERDF contributing a minor share. At the end of 2009, expenditure on road infrastructure amounted to 5% of the budget allocated, while overall, it amounted to just over 6% of allocation. Although all regions are targeted, the majority of financial resources are allocated to Trenčín and Žilina.

*Summary of projects by priority axes and regions:*

PA 1 – two ongoing projects – the modernisation of the Žilina – Krásno nad Kysucou railway line and the Nové Mesto nad Váhom – Púchov line.

PA 2 – three projects completed –the D3 motorway – Hričovské podhradie – Žilina Strážov and the first and second stages of the D1 – Sverepec – Vrtižer motorway.

PA 3 – the preparation of the documentation for 4 projects –for the construction of terminals for intermodal transport in Žilina, Leopoldov, Bratislava and Košice.

PA 4 – three projects in the form of technical – economic studies

PA 5 – approval for the R1– Žarnovica – Šášovské podhradie road.

**The environment and energy** is a priority for both OP Environment and OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth.

*OP Environment* is the second biggest Operational Programme with a financial allocation at EUR 1.8 billion from the ERDF and Cohesion Fund which amounts to 15.8% of the total EU financial allocation. The OP has six priority axes. Expenditure amounted to just 1.8% of the budget allocated at the end of 2009.

---

PA 3 – Improvement of broadband internet access.

- PA 1 – Integrated Protection and Rational Use of Water – 56 projects underway providing access to drinking water, municipal waste water collection and treatment and the connection of households to main drainage. At the end of 2009, 2,720 people had been connected to newly constructed water main, which represents 29% of the target to be achieved by 2015. Some 7,900 people had also been connected to main drainage, which is just 2.5% of the target to be achieved by 2015. Two water treatment plants came into operation, which is only just over 3% of the target.
- PA 2 – Flood Protection – 14 projects are being carried out (5 in the Prešovský region) under measure 2.1 Preventive measures for flood protection. At the end of 2009, expenditure was only 1.8% of the total budget allocated.
- PA 3 – Air Protection and Minimisation of Adverse Effects of Climate Change – 31 projects are underway and at the end of 2009, expenditure was 3.9% of allocation.
- PA 4 – Waste management – 117 projects are being implemented. At the end of 2009, 12 facilities for waste separation, 10 waste recovery facilities and three facilities for hazardous waste treatment had been built or upgraded. The size of the area reclaimed and re-cultivated amounted to 15,000 square metres, which is only 1.5% of what is planned to be achieved by 2015. At the end of 2009, the number of projects approved under this priority axis had already reached 97.5% of the target for the period, though expenditure was only 1/6% of allocation.

Some measures providing support for energy are also carried out under *OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth*. Under PA 4 – Energy – 41 demand-oriented projects are being carried out to improve energy efficiency in production, to introduce progressive technologies in the energy sector and to increase public awareness of energy efficiency and of renewable energy supply.

**Territorial development** is pursued in several Operational Programmes – OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, OP Health, OP Bratislavský kraj and the Regional Operational Programme.

*OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth*: 51 projects are being carried out under PA 3 – Tourism – provide support for business activities in tourism. Since December 2008, one national project has been implemented focused on promoting Slovakia as a tourist destination.

*OP Health* is the second smallest OP in terms of allocation with a budget of EUR 250 million. At the end of 2009, expenditure amounted to 5% of total allocation for the 2007–2013 period. The programme has three priority axes – Modernisation of the Hospital Healthcare System (PA 1), Health Promotion and Prevention of Health Risks (PA 2) and Technical Assistance (PA 3).

- PA 1 – At the end of 2009, 14 projects have been implemented and three projects for the construction and reconstruction of hospital buildings and the provision of medical equipment had been completed (amounting to EUR 13.2 million).
- PA 2 – Under the second priority axis one project had already been completed and 4 are being carried out.

In addition, two national projects are planned to be implemented in 2010 and 2011 – a National Blood Transfusion Service and the Procurement (purchase) of mobile breast-scan units.

In *OP Bratislavský kraj*, 7 projects were being undertaken and 4 for urban regeneration had been completed under PA 1 – Infrastructure at the end of 2009. Expenditure amounted to 3.9% of allocation.

In *OP Environment*, 35 projects were being implemented at the end of 2009, focused on increasing public awareness, publicity, and training and education on the protection of natural resource under PA 5 – Protection and regeneration of the natural environment and landscape. Expenditure amounted to 2.3% of allocation.

The best performing OP in terms of financial and physical implementation is the *Regional Operational Programme* (ROP). Under PA 1–Education Infrastructure, 348 projects are being carried out and 14 have been completed. Total resources allocated to the projects amount to EUR 257.8 million and some 24% of these had been spent by end-2009. Applications for assistance from regional authorities far exceed the total allocation. The largest share of projects being carried out is in Prešov followed by Žilina and Nitra. Financial support under this PA also helped to reduce the adverse effects of the crisis by creating or maintaining employment in construction, while at the same time reducing the infrastructure deficit and increasing the energy efficiency of existing education buildings. On the other hand, financial implementation under the other priority axes was negligible at the end of 2009.

Under PA 1 – Education Infrastructure – 44 projects had been contracted in Trnava, 34 in Trenčín, 33 in Nitra, 74 in Žilina, 44 in Banská Bystrica, 89 in Prešov and 44 in Košice.

Under PA 4 – Regeneration of Settlements – one project has been contracted in Trenčín, one in Nitra, 4 in Žilina, one in Banská Bystrica, two in Prešov and one in Košice.

### **European territorial cooperation**

In general, the main measures contained in the programmes under the cross-border part of the Territorial Cooperation Objective are directed at the labour market, education, cultural activities, tourism, infrastructure and cross-border SME cooperation. The four cross-border projects are still at an early stage of implementation and, therefore, there are no relevant outcomes to report for 2009.



## SECTION 3 – EFFECTS OF INTERVENTION

The fact that all Operational Programmes are at an early stage of implementation makes it difficult to provide information on the effects of intervention, though there is much information on the number of projects completed and underway, as indicated in the previous section. Some of the programmes also report progress in terms of core indicators, though in many cases the values reported are minimal or zero.

In the Regional Operational Programme, expenditure on education infrastructure is contributing to the creation of new jobs, increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and improving the educational process by introduction ICT. Table E shows the progress in terms of core indicators with positive values at the end of 2009.

Enterprise support is covered by several Operational Programmes and is focused on increasing the competitiveness of Slovak enterprises together with support for R&D and innovation activities. The programmes in this area account for a significant share of total funding and are creating favourable conditions for better performance in the future.

**Table E – Values of core indicators at the end of 2009**

	2009	Target (2015)
Number of technical educational facilities(number of projects)	14	640
Number of new and higher quality services provided by educational facilities supported	31	860
Number of children in preschool facilities providing new and higher quality services	190	2000
Number of children in elementary schools providing new and higher quality services	3947	75600
Average reduction of energy consumption of buildings from support	55.77	40

Note: other indicators reported zero values. Source: Annual Implementation Report ROP, 2009

Similarly, improvements in transport infrastructure represent an important contribution to regional development. The lack of a high quality road network connecting the western and the eastern parts of the country is seen as a major factor contributing to the uneven distribution of foreign direct investment across the country. OP Transport, with the biggest allocation of all Operational Programmes, is providing the necessary financial resources for the successful construction of transport routes to improve regional accessibility as well as territorial, economic and social cohesion.

## SECTION 4 – EVALUATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION

In the previous programming period 2004–2006, four evaluations were carried out<sup>11</sup>:

1. Evaluation of the Impact of the Structural Funds at NUTS II and NUTS III level from the perspective of reducing regional disparities<sup>12</sup>. The main aim, in addition to analysing the regional impact of the Funds, was to collect feedback from beneficiaries of support. The evaluation used qualitative analysis, interviews with final beneficiaries and statistical analysis covering all Cohesion Policy programmes.
2. Evaluation report on management systems, implementation and Structural Fund indicators<sup>13</sup>. The focus of the evaluation was to analyse and fine-tune the existing management and administrative system as well as the system of indicators.

The following two evaluations were focused on projects for Roma communities. The main aim was to analyse the achievement of measurable indicators and administrative capacity.

1. Evaluation of the project “Building administrative capacities for the Plenipotentiary Government Office for Roma Communities”<sup>14</sup>;
2. Evaluation report on the impact of seven measures with higher intervention rate 80:20 financed by the Structural Funds on Roma communities<sup>15</sup>.

In the present programming period, each managing authority has formulated detailed evaluation schedules. The evaluations are carried out internally or by external evaluators. Eight external and internal evaluations have been undertaken in relation to 2007–13 programmes (see Table F). The quality, methodological approach, findings and recommendations of the evaluations which have already been carried out differ according to the specific area of intervention of each OP. In general, we can conclude that the evaluations examined provide appropriate support for managing authorities to improve the system of implementation. Most evaluations were carried out at the beginning of the implementation phase and are focused on the management system, the rate of physical and financial implementation and way of

---

<sup>11</sup> Available at [www.nsrr.sk](http://www.nsrr.sk).

<sup>12</sup> Hodnotiaca správa dopadov štrukturálnych fondov 2004 – 2006 na regióny SR na úrovni samosprávnych krajov a následne na úrovni teritoriálnych štatistických jednotiek na úrovni NUTS II z pohľadu redukcie regionálnych disparít. URL:[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334154.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_1.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334154.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_1.doc)

<sup>13</sup> Hodnotenie systémov riadenia, implementácie a indikátorov štrukturálnych fondov. URL:[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334204.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_2.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334204.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_2.doc)

<sup>14</sup> Hodnotiaca správa implementácie projektu „Budovanie administratívnych kapacít Úradu splnomocnenkyne vlády SR pre rómske komunity. URL:[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334210.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_3.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334210.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_3.doc)

<sup>15</sup> Hodnotiaca správa dopadov realizácie 7 opatrení so zvýšenou mierou intervencie 80:20 zo štrukturálnych fondov na rómske komunity. URL:[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334229.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_4.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334229.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_4.doc)

improving existing measurable indicators. Managing authorities are carrying out the evaluations according to time schedules they have adopted. The evaluations are based mainly on qualitative methods combined with rudimentary statistical analysis.

**Table F – Overview of undertaken evaluations for 2007 – 2013 programming period**

Title of evaluation	OP	Methodology	Scope of evaluation	Main findings
Evaluation of the Operational Programme Health Implementation	Health	Evaluation questions. Interim evaluation based on relevance, efficiency and effectiveness criteria. The evaluation based on specification of benchmarks for processes being evaluated with the OP.	Evaluation of efficiency and quality of OP implementation as to 31.12.2009 and formulation of recommendations for the MA.	Appropriate physical progress of the OP and its priority axes in terms of contracting and drawing financial resources
				Satisfactory financial implementation and rate of contracting.
				The risk of failing to draw commitments is minimal due to n+3 rule
				The establishment of the system as a whole meets the requirements of efficient and effective strategy implementation by MA.
Evaluation of management and financial management of MA and IB/MA in OPIS	OP IS	Detailed analysis of internal manuals. Evaluation questions.	Efficiency of administrative capacity.	Appropriate existing system of management and financial management
Evaluation of system of measurable indicators in the OPIS	OP IS	Multi-criterion analysis of existing indicators based on eight attributes.	Cooperation between managing authorities (MA) and intermediate bodies (IB).	The minimum requirements for management and financial management in Slovakia are very complex
			Efficiency and transparency of expenditure incurred.	Increase administrative capacities in later stages of OP implementation.
			Possibilities for improvement of cooperation between MA and IB.	Absence of clear definition of indicators.
			Absence of clear definition of indicators.	Missing methodological description of data collection and data publishing.

Title of evaluation	OP	Methodology	Scope of evaluation	Main findings
Regular evaluation of OP R&D	R&D	Synthesis, analysis and analogy.	The evaluation of objectives of the OP R&D and its priority axes with respect to the real demand of the applicants/beneficiaries and their implementation.	The structure and setting of objectives in priority axes and measures is adequate. There is no need for changes in the structure of priority axes or measures.
			The evaluation of system of quantitative objectives at programme and project level.	The system of indicators is balanced, concisely defined and in interlinked to corresponding objectives of the OP. The indicators provide adequate framework for evaluation of OP.
			The evaluation of complementarity and synergy with other OPs.	The OP complements three OPs – Regional OP, OP Education and OP Bratislava region.
Thematic evaluation on absorption capacity and possibilities for update of project list of OP Transport (OPT)	Transport		Projects in priority axis 1 and 5.	List of projects in priority axes 1 and 5 has been accordingly updated.
Regular evaluation of OP Transport	Transport	Comparative analysis, Qualitative analysis of strengths and weaknesses.	Evaluation of general and specific objectives of the OPT	Both objectives are being fulfilled by the OP.
				Low implementation rate and contracting of projects can lead to loss of financial resources in 2011 and 2012 (n+2(3) rule).
				The construction of indicators makes it difficult to carry out interim monitoring of implementation of projects.
				The majority of projects are still in preparation phase or still in the form of applications for financial support.

Title of evaluation	OP	Methodology	Scope of evaluation	Main findings
Evaluation report of OP CEG	CaEG	Ad hoc evaluation. Qualitative analysis.	Is the implementation of activities in single measures, priority axis and horizontal priorities meeting the programme's overall strategy?	No unplanned delays in the programme implementation were reported and the overall implementation strategy can be considered consistent and well managed. It is highly recommended to dedicate special attention to the implementation of the measure 1.3 "Support of innovation activities in enterprises" and declaration of measurable indicators within all priority axes
			Does programme implementation reach the partial, specific and global objectives of the OPCEG?	There are not identified constraints on the way of reaching the partial, specific and global objectives of the OPCEG
			Is the spending of the financial resources in single measures of the OPCEG sufficient?	Spending of the financial resources is satisfactory and sustainable.
			What are the main obstacles (constraints) to spending?	The most significant were related to strategic release of the calls for proposals within the "de minimis" state aid schemes, and need of revision of the state aid scheme rules for measure 1.3.
			Factors promoting implementation	Regular evaluation of the OPCEG focused on progress and identification of implementation problems Sufficient contracting of the financial resources (from the beginning of OPCEG implementation 17 calls for proposals have been released and closed with an overall budget of almost EUR 700 million (more than 80% of available OPCEG financial resources). Sound management.
			Factors delaying implementation	Relatively high administrative burden of the project proposal preparation Need of revision of the state aid scheme rules for measure 1.3.
			Flexibility on changing demands	The system is able to react to changing demands of the economy as well as to needs of the possible applicants.

Title of evaluation	OP	Methodology	Scope of evaluation	Main findings
Hodnotenie plnenia cieľov politiky súdržnosti prostredníctvom zvyšovania konkurencieschopnosti, vytvárania pracovných príležitostí a zvyšovania zamestnanosti a hodnotenie dopadu hospodárskej krízy	NSRF	Desk research. Semi-structured interviews. Multicriterion analysis.	Evaluation of Cohesion Policy implementation and its contribution to: objectives of Cohesion Policy defined in the Treaty, Community Strategic Guidelines, NSRF and Council Regulation No.1083/2006	<p>Limited (Inadequate) rate of implementation at the end of 2009.</p> <p>Reassessment of specific objectives of the NSRF with regard to the changing economic environment. Focus on measures with potential effects mitigating the effects of the financial crisis.</p> <p>Reducing the number of priority themes in NSRF</p> <p>Creating a comprehensive methodology for drafting Nation Strategic report.</p> <p>Adjustments in the ITMS system related to reporting of financial implementation separately for Convergence and Competitiveness objective.</p>

## SECTION 5 – CONCLUDING REMARKS – FUTURE CHALLENGES

Although the start of the present programming period has been marked by substantial delay in the adoption of the NSRF and delayed approval of the Operational Programmes by the Commission and is still affected by a low level of financial implementation, progress in contracting and approving projects will help to increase implementation rates substantially in the next few years. This should also provide more data to assess the achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes in a more comprehensive and satisfactory way.

The majority of AIRs do not report any significant problems. The evaluations which have been carried out in selected OPs address only particular aspects of implementation (appropriateness of indicators, management and administrative system etc.). The whole system of structural support is being fine-tuned. Although individual AIRs contain a lot of useful information, the quality of the reports varies substantially across the Operational Programmes. Moreover, the reports often contain a lot of technical details which tend to overwhelm and make it difficult to readily understand what has so far been achieved. The author of this report recommends a simplification of the AIRs and a greater focus on the actual or expected achievements.

This report should serve as a starting point for further synthesis evaluations and provides limited but still important insight into the development of Cohesion Policy programmes in a small post-transition economy. Although the programmes are expected to provide vital support to regions, especially in the least developed eastern and southern parts of Slovakia, it is important to overcome the challenges (or bottlenecks) which exist if the effects of intervention are to be maximised. Recent data provide some positive signs of progress as regards the OPs. At the end of October 2010, certified eligible expenditure reached 9.9% of total allocation and commitments amounted to 52% of the overall resources available for the period.



## REFERENCES

### 1. Relevant evaluations by type, indicating the coverage and focus, the method used, when they were carried out and the period they relate to:

- *Evaluations of specific operational programmes*

Evaluation of the Operational Programme Health Implementation – Final report (2009), carried out by Consulting Associates, s.r.o., Contracting authority Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic

Hodnotiaca správa operačného programu Konkurencieschopnosť a hospodársky rast k 30.9. 2009 – Operatívne Ad Hoc hodnotenie v zmysle Plánu hodnotení OP KaHR (2009), carried out by MA of the OP.

Pravidelné hodnotenie operačného programu Výskum a vývoj (2009), carried out by Intermediate body of the Managing authority of the OP

Operatívne hodnotenie Operačného programu Doprava. Poskytovanie služieb v oblasti riadenia a implementácie Operačného programu Doprava 2007 – 2013 (2009), carried out by Unimedia and Deloitte, Contracting authority Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications

- *Evaluations of specific aspects of operational programmes*

Hodnotenie nastavenia systému merateľných ukazovateľov OPIS (2009), carried out by AJG Consulting s.r.o. and EUROFORMES, a.s., Contracting authority Government Office of the Slovak Republic

Hodnotenie fungovania riadenia a finančného riadenia OPIS zo strany RO a SORO (2009), carried out by AJG Consulting s.r.o. and EUROFORMES, a.s., Contracting authority Government Office of the Slovak Republic

Hodnotenie dopadov štrukturálnych fondov 2004 – 2006 na regióny SR na úrovni samosprávnych krajov a následne na úrovni teritoriálnych štatistických jednotiek na úrovni NUTSII (Západné Slovensko, Stredné Slovensko a Východné Slovensko) z pohľadu redukcie regionálnych disparít, URL:

[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334154.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_1.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334154.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_1.doc)

Rozvoj hodnotiacich kapacít MVRR SR a ostatných zainteresovaných rezortov – Hodnotenie systémov riadenia, implementácie a ukazovateľov štrukturálnych fondov, URL:

[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334204.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_2.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334204.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_2.doc)

Hodnotenie implementácie projektu technickej asistencie „Budovanie administratívnych kapacít

Úradu splnomocnenca vlády pre rómske komunity URL:

[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334210.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_3.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334210.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_3.doc)

Hodnotenie dopadov 7 opatrení so zvýšenou mierou intervencie zo strany štrukturálnych fondov na marginalizované rómske komunity, URL:

[http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334229.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita\\_4.doc](http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1255334229.upl&ANAME=HS+Aktivita_4.doc)

## **2. Other relevant research studies and impact assessments carried out in the Member State**

Hodnotenie dopadov krízy na zamestnanosť, carried out by Consulting Associates, Bratislava, 4. december 2009

## **3. Other references**

Výročná správa o implementácii Programu cezhraničnej spolupráce Slovenská republika – Česká republika 2007 – 2013 za rok 2009

The Annual Report 2009 of the Hungary – Slovakia Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007–2013

The Annual Report 2009 of the Slovakia – Austria Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007–2013

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Zdravotníctvo za rok 2009, Ministerstvo zdravotníctva SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Veda a Výskum za rok 2009, Ministerstvo školstva SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Regionálneho operačného programu za rok 2009, Ministerstvo výstavby a regionálneho rozvoja SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Doprava za rok 2009, Ministerstvo dopravy, pôšt a telekomunikácií SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Konkurencieschopnosť a hospodársky rast za rok 2009, Ministerstvo Hospodárstva SR

Výročná Správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Informatizácia spoločnosti za rok 2009, Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky

## **INTERVIEWS**

Government office of The Slovak Republic – Evaluation Unit

## **TABLE**

See Excel file for Table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Regional disparities and trends

Table 2: Macro-economic developments

Table 3: Financial allocation by main policy area