

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

YEAR 1 – 2011

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

SLOVAKIA

VERSION: FINAL

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

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AF Activity Field
- AIR Annual Implementation Report
- CBC Cross Border Cooperation
- EIB European Investment Bank
- ERDF European Regional Development Fund
- ESF European Social Fund
- GDP Gross Domestic Product
- ICT Information Communication Technologies
- JEREMIE Joint European Resources For Micro To Medium Enterprises
- JESSICA Joint European Support For Sustainable Investment In City Areas
- NSRF National Strategic Reference Framework
- NUTS Nomenclature Of Territorial Units For Statistics
- OP Operational Programme
- OP BK Operational Programme Bratislava Region
- OP CaEG Operational Programme Competitiveness And Economic Growth
- OP R&D Operational Programme Research And Development
- OP H Operational Programme Health
- OPIS Operational Programme Informatisation Of Society
- p.p. Percentage Points
- PA Priority Axis
- PPP Public Private Partnership
- PPS Purchasing Power Standard
- ROP Regional Operational Programme
- RTDI Research, Technological Development and Innovation
- SME Small Medium Enterprise(s)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The regional policy of Slovakia is heavily reliant on Cohesion Policy support. Without EU funding national regional policy would lack the necessary resources for regional development. Especially in times of fiscal consolidation and impact of global economic crisis, the Cohesion Policy is providing significant amount of financial resources for regional development in all policy areas. The areas which are benefiting from the progress in implementation of operational programmes are transport infrastructure, research and development, environment, support of enterprises, healthcare and regeneration of public infrastructure.

Since the end of 2009, the rate of implementation has gradually increased in the majority of operational programmes, even in those which have been performing poorly from the beginning of the programming period. Concrete actions are being undertaken to address the remaining bottlenecks and fine-tune the whole system in order to improve the absorption of funds and avoid the loss of financial sources due to the “n+3” rule (especially in the Operational Programme (OP) Informatisation of Society and the OP Transport).

Progress in physical and financial implementation in the present programming period still varies across operational programmes. Although the implementation of Cohesion Policy programmes gained momentum in 2010 (mainly in the number of contracted projects and projects being implemented), it is still difficult to provide clear evidence on impact of completed projects on regional or national level. The improvement in financial and physical implementation has been recorded in enterprise support and Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) activities, transport, and in the area of territorial development (especially public education infrastructure and health). The investments in enterprise support (under OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth) and public infrastructure on regional level (under the Regional OP) helped to offset the negative impact of the financial and economic crisis, by maintaining employment and improving the quality of public infrastructure in regions. The expenditure on education infrastructure is increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and improving the educational process by introducing Information Communication Technologies (ICT).

All evaluations carried out in 2010 are focused on performance efficiency and quality of the existing managing authorities or intermediate bodies under managing authorities, analysis of physical indicators, achievement of the policy implementation in some operational programmes and revision of existing operational programmes. The evaluations are providing feedback to managing authorities for improvement of internal procedures, identify the bottlenecks and provide concrete solutions which need to be implemented. The evaluations focusing on the achievements of Cohesion Policy are expected to be carried out in 2011 and 2012.

Although some important challenges raised in the previous country report have already been addressed, a lot of challenges are still present and need to be overcome. The large environmental and transport infrastructure projects are having difficulties with public procurement. The still extensive administrative burden imposed on beneficiaries needs to be further reduced. Also the projects focusing on marginalised Roma communities (implementation of local strategies and demand-driven projects) are being implemented rather slowly.

1. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The regional disparities in Slovakia are characterised by a significant west – east and north – south divide with the Bratislava region being the most developed region in terms of GDP per capita. 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 defines the National Regional Development Strategy and 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 relevant national strategic documents).

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

- Lack of high quality transport infrastructure, low regional interconnection and accessibility.
- Institutional quality of regional and local administration.
- Low inter-regional as well as intra-regional mobility of labour force.
- Difficult access to affordable 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 – proximity to low developed regions of Ukraine, Poland and Hungary.
- Restructuring of “traditional” industry sectors.
- The quality of human resources (education attainment, entrepreneurial spirit).

In 2010, the Slovak economy returned to growth with annual GDP growth equal to 4.5% and it is expected that Slovakia will reach its GDP pre-recession level already in 2011. This rapid recovery was caused mainly by the increase of government consumption, the increase of exports and by a robust growth of gross capital formation (investments). From the perspective of regional disparities, there was a slight convergence among the regions in 2008 (Table A). The disparities between the Bratislava region and the worst performing region have been growing till 2008 (disparity 1 and disparity 4). Similarly, the distance of Trnava region relative to the worst performing Prešov region has also grown constantly. The values of the disparity indicators (shown in table A) measured by GDP per capita in PPS slightly declined in 2008. This can be explained by the robust economic growth in the preceding years (in 2006–2008 the average real GDP growth was 8.3%), with positive effects

on regional GDP growth. However, the impact of global recession which affected the Slovak economy mainly in 2009 probably reversed this positive development¹.

Table A – Development of regional disparities in 2000 – 2008

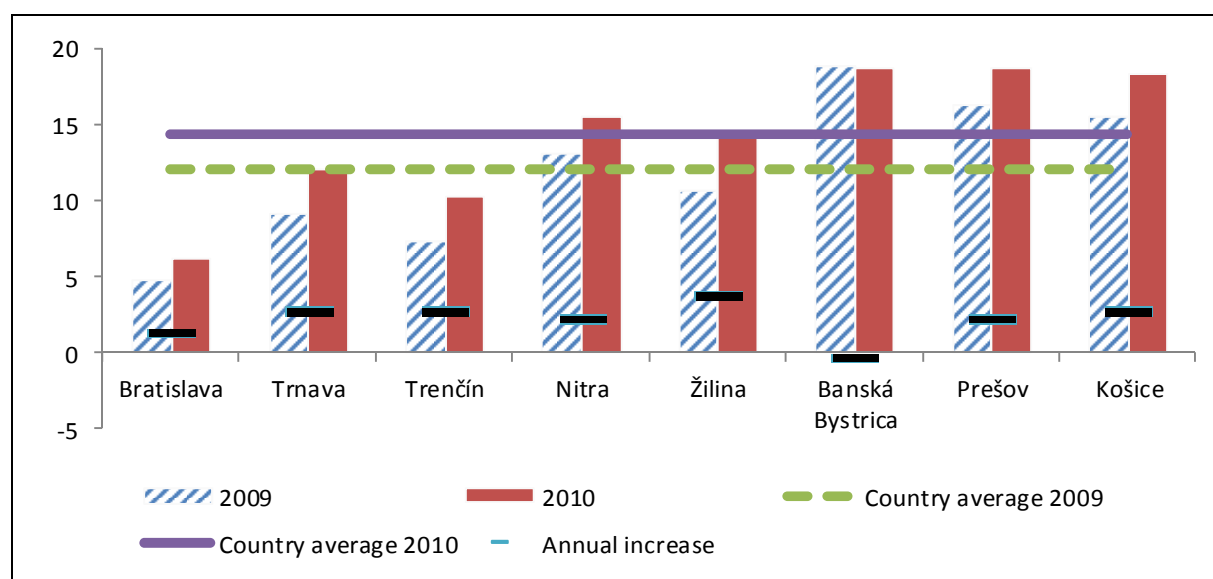
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Disparity 1	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.3
Disparity 2	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	2.2
Disparity 3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Disparity 4	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3

Source: Statistical Office of Slovakia (2011), own calculations, Note: Disparity 1 – ratio of GDP per capita PPS of the best performing region (Bratislava region) relative to the worst performing region (Prešovský region), Disparity 2 – ratio of GDP per capita PPS of the second best performing region (Trnavský region) relative to the worst performing region (Prešovský region), Disparity 3 – ratio of GDP per capita PPS of the worst performing region (Prešovský region) relative to GDP per capita of Slovakia, Disparity 4 – ratio of GDP per capita PPS of the best performing region (Bratislava region) relative to GDP per capita of Slovakia.

The economic recession affected all Slovak regions and resulted in an increase in unemployment rates (above the national average) especially in the eastern and central parts of the country. However, the more developed regions in western part of Slovakia were affected as well (Figure 1). In general, the regions mostly affected by the recession, were regions with a high share of export oriented industries localised in the western and northern parts of the country.

The economic recovery in 2010 was driven by external demand and gross capital formation. The recovery of production in export oriented industries (automotive, electronic) has not been accompanied by rapid employment growth which resulted in substantial increase of labour productivity. The government austerity measures focused on layoffs of civil servants and employees in state owned enterprises (e.g. railways) contributed to growth of unemployment rate by 2.3 p.p. (Figure 1). From a regional perspective only the Banská Bystrica region recorded minor decrease of unemployment rate by 0.2 p.p. However, the unemployment rate in this region was still above the national average of 14.4%.

¹ The data for regional GDP per capita in PPS were published by the Eurostat with substantial delay, which makes it difficult to provide more up to date analysis and conclusions. However, the development on the national level leads to the conclusion, that due to the impact of the global recession, the convergence among Slovak regions has been reversed or at least stopped.

Figure 1 – Development of unemployment rate in 2009 and 2010 (Labour force survey)

Source: Statistical Office of Slovakia (2011)

The macroeconomic policy carried out in 2010 focused primarily on the reduction of the general government deficit. Due to the parliamentary elections in June 2010, the fiscal policy had only little manoeuvring space to elaborate a thorough plan for fiscal consolidation. Most of the measures focus only on general cuts in expenditure and increasing general government revenue. Further measures have been directed at institutional changes, electronic public procurement and auctions, sale of excessive immovable property, increase of direct and indirect taxes (VAT by 1 percentage point from 19% to 20%).

The budgetary policies implemented in 2010 in general focus on areas, which were not connected to Cohesion Policy programmes. However, the still unfavourable budgetary conditions of regional and local governments, made it more difficult to provide the necessary funding for co-financing. In order to reduce the impact of insufficient domestic financial sources, the Slovak government signed a framework agreement with the European Investment Bank (EIB) which will provide additional EUR 1.3 billion for the co-financing of all operational programmes in the present programming period². The framework agreement will also provide financial support for project pre-financing needs before the corresponding contribution is covered by the European Commission.

The impact of the economic recession on regional and local governments resulted in lower tax revenue. This made it difficult to conduct any regional interventions from their budgets. In order to counteract this and provide regional authorities with sufficient financing, a Memorandum was agreed between regional representatives and central government³, under which over EUR 100 million was transferred from the State budget to municipalities and

² The agreement was signed on 16th November 2010.

³ <http://www.government.gov.sk/13565/memorandum-o-spolupraci-pri-rieseni-dopadov-financnej-a-hospodarskej-krizy-medzi-vladou-sr-a-zmos.php>

regions in 2009 to compensate for the loss of revenue. To prevent the difficulties with financing of regional and local governments in the future, the national government is expected to adopt a series of legal budgetary measures focused on changes in revenues distribution⁴. The changes are expected to provide the regional and local governments with more stable revenue from all tax revenues, not only the personal income tax.

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

2. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED, THE EU CONTRIBUTION TO THIS AND POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PERIOD

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PURSUED

Regional policy in Slovakia in the current programming period is set out in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) (and in line with other national strategic documents) 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 the least developed and is carried out in the framework of eleven operational programmes.
- The priorities under the Competitiveness Objective in the Bratislava region are to develop knowledge-based activities (education, support for R&D, for building R&D infrastructure and knowledge transfer, innovation and technology transfers and ICT) and infrastructure building (regeneration of towns and cities and regional and urban transport). The measures funded by the Cohesion Fund in the Bratislava region are covering environmental projects in the framework of OP Environment and also OP Transport (complementarity between OP Transport and OP Bratislava region in building roads TEN-T, rail and intermodal transport).
- The regions under the Convergence Objective (seven NUTS III regions) are eligible for support to the enterprise environment, healthcare, transport infrastructure, education, ICT, R&D, the environment and energy as well as territorial development, with substantially larger financial allocation.
- The financial engineering instruments Joint European Resources For Micro To Medium Enterprises (JEREMIE) and Joint European Support For Sustainable Investment In City Areas (JESSICA) are under preparation with expected implementation starting in 2012.
- 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

⁴ The changes in the financing of regional and local governments has been cancelled due to early parliamentary elections.

activities, tourism, infrastructure and cross-border Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) cooperation. Besides cross border programmes, following projects are being carried out in the field of territorial cooperation:

- Program of interregional territorial cooperation – INTERREG IVC.
- Programme of transnational territorial cooperation– Central Europe a Southeast Europe.
- Programme INTERACT II.
- The implementation of policy at a regional level is based on individual Strategies of Economic and Social Development covering the present programming period. The strategies are linked to the priorities of NSRF.
- The support is provided in the form of grants to final beneficiaries through specific operational programmes (e.g. Competitiveness and Economic growth) which differ across regions.

Slovakia has received 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. The additional financial resources were distributed among the Regional OP, the OP Environment and the OP Bratislava Region.

In 2010, there have been shifts in priorities and allocation within operational programmes OP Bratislava region and OP Environment. The OP Bratislava has been revised in 2010 (but not approved by the Commission at the end of 2010). The main changes are following:

- Reallocation of financial resources within the first priority axis from measure 1.2 regional and urban public transport to measure 1.1 Regeneration of settlements.
- Reallocation of financial resources in the second priority axis. Due to low demand the allocation was decreased in the area of support for industrial research and experimental development (activity 2.1.1) and projects focused on ICT accessibility in SMEs (activity 2.2.3). The financial has been transferred to support of introduction and use of progressive technologies in SMEs (activity 2.1.2) and Electronisation of municipalities and development of electronic services on local and regional level (activity 2.2.1).
- Changes related to preparation of implementation of the JESSICA financial instrument.

The main changes in the OP Environment are following:

- The possibility of using the financial engineering instrument JEREMIE within priority axis 3 – Air protection and Minimizing Adverse Impacts of Climate Change was set up.

- Reallocation of resources from the EU funds in order to find solutions for flood control activities within the Operational Program Environment⁵.

The reallocation between the priority axes of the OP Informatisation of Society has been adopted at the end of 2010⁶.

In 2011, the allocations in the respective priority axes in the Regional OP have been revised (See Annex Table A). Additional EUR 60 million has been allocated to the European capital of culture project (Košice 2013). The highest increase (EUR 68.5 million) has been allocated to Infrastructure of Education followed by EUR 32.1 million to Regeneration of Settlements and EUR 8.2 million to Regional communications ensuring transport serviceability of the regions.

The reasons for such shifts in the operational programmes are basically linked to the following factors:

- Experience from implementation of OPs and recommendations resulting from conducted evaluations with the objective to improve the absorption capacity and allocate funding to best performing priority axes, measures and activities.
- Changes in economic and other circumstances which resulted in lower (or higher) demand for financial support in specific priority axes, measures or activities of individual operational programmes (e.g. the need to cover overbooking in the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) projects on regeneration of settlements, and decrease for housing in priority axis 4 of the same OP; flood control activities, low demand in the area of industrial research and experimental development etc.).

The increasing rate of financial implementation (and improvement in the rate of already contracted projects) in most of the operational programmes is providing additional financial support in areas lacking domestic funding. The areas which are benefiting from Cohesion Policy support are transport infrastructure, environment, research and development, enterprise support, healthcare and regeneration of public infrastructure. Especially the projects financed by the Regional OP provide a significant financial contribution for interventions on regional and local level (the demand for projects in the Priority Axis (PA) 1 – Infrastructure of Education is already exceeding the actual allocation).

⁵ Modification of the text of the call OPE-PO2-10-3 in the section 2. Indicative amount of funds, from 21,989,942 EUR from CF and State Budget to the amount of 11,989,942 EUR, regarding to the material Information on the possibility of reallocation of resources from the EU funds, in order to find solutions for flood control activities within the Operational Program Environment, under the number UV-33571/2010, in which the government of the Slovak Republic noted also „transfer of the part of the finance from operational objective 2.1, II. Of the group of eligible activities to support activities aimed at implementing the measures meant for flood prevention“. Ministry of Environment (2010)

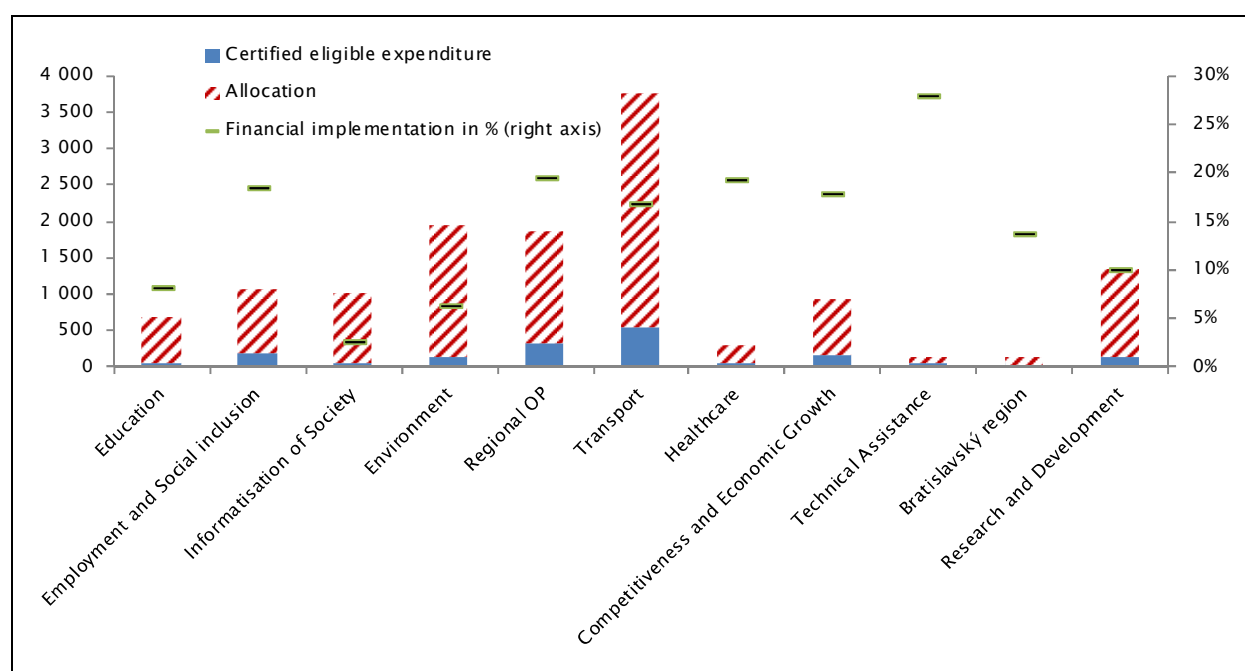
⁶ Reallocation of EUR 150 million in the priority axis 1 from measure 1.2 to measure 1.1. and another reallocation of EUR 5 million to the OP CaEG (JEREMIE initiative).

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The rate of implementation of operational programmes in 2010 and 2011 has been steadily accelerating. Most of the programmes are being gradually implemented, although some priority axes in operational programmes are still behind expectations. The end of consolidation of institutional framework (changes and shifts of competences among managing authorities) after the parliamentary elections, together with already contracted projects in previous years contributed to acceleration of financial implementation especially in 2011. Moreover, a set of measures adopted in May 2011 by the government and their gradual implementation should create additional stimuli for further improvement in implementation in the following years. The effects of the adopted measures will be evaluated in 2012.

By the end of 2009, the rate of financial implementation reached only 4.5%, which represented an annual increase of 4.3 p.p. (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Financial implementation of Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund in the programming period 2007 – 2013 (Objective 1 and 2) at the end of 2010



At the end of 2010, the rate of financial implementation increased to 13.4%, which represented an annual increase by 8.9 p.p. The highest year-on-year increase was recorded in the Operational Programme Healthcare by 14.3 p.p.; Regional Operational Programme, OP Technical assistance by 13.2 p.p.; OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth by 12.1 p.p. and OP Transport by 10.5 p.p. In contrast, the lowest increase was recorded in OP Informatisation of Society by 2.2 p.p.; OP Environment by 4.5 p.p.; OP Education by 7.3 p.p. and OP Research and development by 7.1 p.p.

The rate of contracted allocation (commitments) and financial implementation has gained momentum in 2011 (end of July), compared with previous years (Table B).

Table B – Development of Cohesion Policy implementation at the end of July 2011

Operational Programme	Commitments in % of total allocation	Financial implementation in % of total allocation	Increase in Financial implementation since the end of 2010
Informatisation of Society	35.0	5.6	3.0
Competitiveness and Economic Growth	72.9	24.7	7.0
Research and Development	60.9	15.8	5.9
Education	43.4	10.4	2.3
Environment	10.4	1.9	-4.4
Bratislava region	45.2	25.0	11.3
Transport	44.9	21.0	4.2
Technical Assistance	85.7	35.2	7.3
Employment and Social Inclusion	81.0	28.0	9.6
Healthcare	98.3	28.9	9.6
Regional OP	90.1	31.7	12.2

Source: own calculations based on www.nsrr.sk⁷. Note: negative numbers in OP Environment are due to a mistake in table generation from the ITMS information system.

Although the progress in implementing the Cohesion Policy support increased, the main factors reported in the previous country report can still be identified as relevant for implementation of some of the operational programmes⁸. However, there has been a commitment of the government with the cooperation of managing authorities to address these bottlenecks in 2011.

In order to improve the overall financial implementation the Central Coordination Authority – The Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development elaborated a comprehensive document which identifies the main factors which are impeding the implementation of operational programmes. The document⁹ was adopted by the government in May 2011 and formulates specific and detailed series of measures focused on the improvement of Cohesion Policy implementation. The measures address the following problematic areas:

- Reduction of administrative burden during the whole life cycle of projects.

⁷ http://www.nsrr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1313503051.upl&ANAME=Mon_tab-11-07-31SK.xls

⁸ Factors identified in 2010 country report:

- Difficulties in public procurement;
- Preparation and approval of major 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;
- Bureaucracy;
- Difficulties relating to the IT monitoring system (ITMS).

⁹ Problematické oblasti implementácie operačných programov a horizontálnych priorít NSRR, URL: <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=19714>

- Adjustments in procedures related to the eligibility of expenditure related to projects in implementation.
- Greater objectiveness and transparency of project selection and approval.
- Improvement of public procurement procedures in relation to project selection and approval.
- Improvement and stabilisation of administrative capacities and legal framework.
- Increase the role of evaluations in policy implementation.

The impact of these measures on the implementation will be evaluated in the next report on the basis of Annual Implementation Reports for 2012.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMMES SO FAR

Since the end of 2009, a substantial increase in the number of contracted projects has been recorded and the number of completed projects reporting first results across all operational programmes. In general, the operational programmes which recorded progress in 2009, performed well also during the following year. More detailed information on achievements in 2009 can be found in last year's country report¹⁰.

Enterprise support and RTDI

The support of traditional activities and the development of new ones, R&D and innovation, strengthening links between businesses and research, increased technology diffusion, development of centres of excellence etc. is being pursued through three Operational Programmes: OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, OP Bratislava region and OP Research and Development. Support of ICT and related services is pursued through the OP Informatisation of Society and OP Bratislava region (support for ICT related services in SMEs).

OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Support carried out in the Priority axis 1 – “Innovation and Growth of Competitiveness” is focused on introducing innovative technologies in production, expanding productive capacity and supporting enterprises in various industrial branches (e.g. energy, hydraulics, bearings, material engineering etc.). The projects are financed in the form of non-repayable grants and the support is regionally differentiated with the highest co-financing rates provided for the least developed regions. From a regional perspective the highest number of finished projects has been recorded in the Nitra region (33 projects), followed by Prešov region (26 projects), Banská Bystrica region (25 projects) and Košice region (23 projects). The number of projects in implementation and number of contracted projects has also increased since the end of 2009. At the end of 2010, a total of 423 projects were contracted, 228 projects were in the implementation phase and 142 were finished. The already finished projects created additional 251 jobs and it is expected, that the volume of already contracted projects will create additional 5,862 jobs. However, the fulfilment of

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/country_reports/slovakia.pdf

these objectives can be verified thoroughly after the implementation of contracted projects. In financial terms, the volume of finished projects amounted to EUR 90.2 million and the volume of contracted projects amounted to EUR 324.3 million at the end of 2010.

OP Research and Development

The OP Research and Development is supporting regions under the Convergence and Competitiveness objective. At the end of 2010, the financial implementation reached 9.9% and the volume of contracted projects reached 84.8%. Two calls have been launched in the PA 2 – Support for R&D.¹¹ At the end of 2010, four projects were finished, 161 projects were being implemented and 205 projects were contracted. In financial terms the total allocation for contracted projects reached EUR 325.2 million. The implementation of this priority axis resulted in an increase in the number of researchers benefiting from support from 156 to 1,459, the number of publications in scientific journals grew from 30.4 to 608.7, the number of technologically appreciated R&D institutions went up from 6 to 98, the number of projects connecting R&D and enterprise sector grew from 58 to 138.

In the Bratislava region the implementation of PA 4 – “Support for R&D in Bratislava region” is financing R&D activities with the aim to increase competitiveness, reduce regional disparities, support new innovative SMEs and create new jobs. At the end of 2010, 84 projects were in the implementation phase, 101 projects were contracted, and no projects were finished. In financial terms the volume of contracted projects reached EUR 162 million. The implementation resulted in increased value of selected physical indicators. The number of researchers benefiting from support increased on an annual basis from 515 to 2,165, the number of publications in scientific journals increased from 9 to 170, the number of technological appreciation of R&D institutions went up from 7 to 57, the number of projects supporting networking among R&D institutions grew from 26 to 35 and the number of collaborative projects between R&D and enterprises increased from 25 to 66.

In PA 5 – Higher Education Infrastructure focused on modernisation of physical and ICT infrastructure in universities – 43 projects are underway (compared with 29 projects in 2009) and three projects have already been finished. In financial terms the volume of contracted projects reached EUR 222.6 million and the volume of finished projects reached EUR 12.5 million. The most significant increase in physical indicators was recorded in the number of new upgraded buildings and facilities.

Besides demand oriented projects, two national projects are being implemented:

- 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 the Slovak Academy of Sciences and

¹¹ Measure 2.1 Support of networks of excellence in research and development as the pillars of regional development and support to international cooperation and measure 2.2 Transfer of knowledge and technology from research and development into practice.

- National Infrastructure for Support of Technology Transfer (NIIT).

The main difficulties in implementing R&D projects are linked to bureaucratic procedures, mistakes in the submitted proposals of applicants (related to budgetary issues of the projects), difficulties in the ITMS information system and existing bureaucratic burden related to projects in implementation. Concrete steps are being taken by the managing authority with the cooperation of relevant stakeholders to eliminate these negative factors. Despite these obstacles, the high level of already contracted projects in OP R&D is gradually helping to increase the rate of financial implementation in 2011.

OP Informatisation of Society

The OP Information Society (OPIS) has traditionally the lowest financial implementation rate of all operational programmes, with financial implementation reaching only 2.6% of overall allocation. The projects (especially in the first priority axis) which are going to be implemented during 2011 are based on a number of feasibility studies. The feasibility studies have been the only tangible result of the implementation of this OP at the end of 2010. However, positive development has been recorded in the number of contracted projects in PA 1 – Electronisation of public administration and development of electronic services. The volume of contracted projects reached EUR 534 million covering 27 projects. The financial implementation and number of contracted projects in other of priority axes recorded no progress at all (with the exception of PA 4 – Technical assistance). The delays in implementation have been influenced by changes in already approved (contracted) projects related to e-government services. The audit and reassessment of already approved project by the new government created additional delays in implementation of this OP. The revision of the OP was approved by the European Commission in November 2010.

OP Bratislava region

In priority axis 2 – Knowledge economy there are two relevant measures; 2.1 Support innovation and technological transfers, and 2.2 – Informatisation of society under the Regional competitiveness and employment objective. At the end of 2010, a total of 7 projects related to innovation and technological transfers were finished and 42 projects were being implemented. The expenditure on already finished projects amounted to EUR 1 million. The total allocation for projects in implementation reached EUR 5.4 million. On the whole the demand for R&D activities is rather low. In general, the enterprises give preference to projects focused on technology transfer, which provide the opportunity to minimise costs and maximise output without taking any substantial risks connected to R&D investments.

The measure 2.2 Informatisation of society is supporting information and communication technologies (ICT) projects. At the end of 2010, a total of 9 projects were finished and 21 projects were being implemented. The expenditure on completed projects amounted to EUR 0.5 million and the expenditure on projects in implementation reached EUR 11.2 million. Delays in implementation can be observed in regional and local e-government projects.

Moreover, the progress in covering areas not covered by broadband internet access (white spots) by private sector made the support from Structural Funds in this area redundant.

Environment and energy

The support for energy related activities is provided by the OP Environment and the OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth provide support to the energy sector. Compared with the previous year, the rate of physical and financial implementation increased. The supported projects in this area are focused on improving energy efficiency in production, introducing progressive technologies in the energy sector and on increasing public awareness of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth

In 2010, a total of 178 projects were contracted in the second priority axis of OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth. In measure 2.1 Increasing energy efficiency and introducing advanced technologies in the energy sector a total of 60 projects were contracted (16 projects are already finished) with total allocation of EUR 69.8 million (EUR 21.7 million). These projects created additional energy production capacity of 29.4 MW from renewable energy sources (especially from biomass). This helped to increase the revenue in the supported companies by 34.9%. According to the number of already contracted projects, the total capacity of energy produced by RES will reach 101.3 MW at the end of 2015. However, the changes in the RES support, which are going to be implemented in the near future, could influence the actual outcome in 2015.

In measure 2.2 – Building and modernisation of public lighting in cities and municipalities and energy consulting a total of 118 new projects worth EUR 33.9 million were contracted (with no projects finished in 2010). Apart from the aforementioned demand-oriented projects, one national project is being implemented with total allocation of EUR 10.8 million. The project is focused on support and increase of public awareness of energy efficiency in enterprises and households.

OP Environment

The projects in OP Environment are financed through six priority axes by the ERDF and Cohesion Fund with total allocation at EUR 1.8 billion. The financial implementation amounted to 6.4% of which ERDF related expenditures reached 12.0% and Cohesion Fund related expenditures amounted to 5.6% at the end of 2010. Although the rate of implementation is rather low, progress has been recorded in all priority axes. In 2010, the highest implementation with expenditures amounting to 9.9% of overall allocation was recorded in PA 3 – Air protection and minimisation of adverse effects of climate change (improvement of air quality, support for clean public transportation, mitigating the effects of climate change) followed by PA 4 – Waste management with 8.3%. Also the cumulative rate of financial implementation for the whole programming period was the highest in these priority axes.

In PA 2 a total of 8 projects have been finished and 100 projects are being implemented. In financial terms the volume of finished projects reached EUR 8.4 million and the amount of contracted projects reached EUR 169 million.

In PA 4 a total of 21 were finished at the end of 2010 and 141 projects were in implementation phase. The value of already finished projects reached EUR 13.8 million and value of contracted ones EUR 269 million.

Due to the still low level of project implementation, influenced by institutional changes, difficulties in public procurement, adverse effects of economic recession limiting the possibilities for co-financing, there have been only negligible changes in observed physical indicators.

Territorial development

The support of territorial development is being carried out through the OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth, the OP Health, the OP Bratislava region and the Regional Operational Programme. The majority of operational programmes have increased their performance in physical and financial implementation.

The OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth is providing support for tourism related activities, however in 2010 no new calls were carried out in this priority axis due to administrative and legal factors (changes in competences). Since the beginning of the programming period in the measure *3.1 Support of business activities in tourism* 6 projects have been finished, 82 projects are being implemented and the total number of contracted projects reached 91 at the end of 2010. In financial terms the value of finished projects reached EUR 36.9 million and the volume of contracted projects reached EUR 126.6 million. The financial implementation in this measure reached 25.4% of overall allocation. Given the low number of projects in implementation at the end of 2010 and large number of rejected projects (469), the objective to create 3,600 jobs at the end of programming period in tourism will not be achieved. The already finished projects created 143 new jobs, and number of contracted projects is expected to create additional 1,094 new jobs.

OP Health

OP Health is the second smallest OP in terms of allocation with a budget of EUR 250 million. At the end of 2010, expenditure amounted to 19.3% of total allocation for the present programming 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). At the end of 2010, a total number of 10 projects had been already finished and 42 projects were being implemented. In financial terms the volume of finished projects reached EUR 20.3 million and the volume of contracted projects amounted to EUR 280.1 million. The progress in implementation resulted in achievements reflected in reported physical indicators.

In PA 1 the number of patients hospitalised in modernised facilities reached 10,746, the average period of hospitalisation went down from 10.8 to 4.6 days, the number of beds operated in the modernised facilities increased from 90 to 919 and created 122 new jobs. The total area of reconstructed facilities grew from 11,720 square meters to 55,893 square meters in 2010.

In the second priority axis the value of the physical indicator of the number of patients provided with healthcare in modernised facilities grew from 668 to 4,632 persons. The total area of reconstructed facilities increased from 660 square meters to 10,559 square meters.

Besides demand oriented projects, one national project is supported in the priority axis 2 – Infrastructure of National Transfusion Service of Slovakia.

Regional Operational Programme

The ROP is the best performing OP in terms of physical and financial implementation. The programme is supporting regional activities focused on transport, education and social infrastructure, cultural heritage and regeneration of settlements under the Convergence objective. The increasing number of contracted projects is contributing to higher rates of financial implementation. Especially in the PA1 – Infrastructure of education, the volume of contracted projects is exceeding its allocation, which is one of the reasons for the revision of the operational programme¹². The high demand for projects confirms the existing infrastructure deficit (insufficient quality of buildings) and highlights the importance of Cohesion Policy support in this area. A total of 187 projects have been finished and 754 projects have been contracted. In financial terms the volume of finished projects reached EUR 131 million and the volume of contracted projects EUR 586 million. Progress in implementation resulted in increased value of some physical indicators. The number of modernised education facilities grew from 14 to 186, 109 children are benefiting from new services provided by modernised pre-school facilities and 915 children are benefiting from new services provided by elementary schools. The projects also increased energy efficiency in buildings by reducing energy consumption by 37.3%.

The financial implementation of second priority axis – Infrastructure of social services, social-legal protection and social guardianship reached only 0.3%, due to the lower than expected demand for this type of project, changes in legislation and European trends in social policy as well as to objections of the European Commission on projects related to children's homes institutional facilities.

The financial implementation in the third priority axis – Strengthening of cultural potential of regions and tourism infrastructure is facing similar difficulties and is behind the objectives set in the operational programme. Furthermore, the tourism related activities covered by the third priority axis overlap with the OP Competitiveness and Economic

¹² However, the revision of the OP and the additional financial resources are still not sufficient to cover the overbooking in this priority axis.

Growth, which started the implementation already in 2008. Although there should be synergy effects between the two operational programmes, the actual implementation is showing the opposite due to lack of coordination of the responsible managing authorities. Furthermore, the changes in legislation related to tourism support (adopted in 2010) created new framework for this kind of support in Slovakia. The legislation represents new and first systematic legal framework for tourism support. This resulted in a decrease of allocation by EUR 41.2 million in the revision of the Regional OP adopted in 2011.

In PA 4 – Regeneration of settlements substantial progress has been achieved in the number of contracted projects. At the end of 2010 a total of 567 projects have been contracted with total allocation at EUR 347 million (mainly in the measures: 4.1a – Demand oriented projects focused on development of municipalities and 4.2 – Infrastructure of non-commercial rescue services. The financial implementation of already finished five projects amounted to EUR 11.7 million, which represents only 2.5% of total priority axis allocation.

OP Bratislava region

The OP is supporting activities under the Regional competitiveness and employment objective in the Bratislava region. In priority axis 1 – Infrastructure, 33 projects are being implemented and 8 projects have been completed. At the end of 2010, all projects in implementation were focused on regeneration of settlements. The implementation of projects focused on integrated projects for regeneration of urban and rural areas has not yet started. The expenditure of finished projects amounted to EUR 3 million and the volume of contracted projects reached EUR 18 million. At the end of 2010, only few values for physical indicators are reported (Table E).

Transport and telecommunications

The development in this policy area was strongly influenced by the end of the political cycle in 2010. The new government revised the previous strategy of transport infrastructure construction. Therefore, a large number of new projects was started with emphasis on EU funding, especially in priority axis 2 – Road infrastructure. The implementation of transport infrastructure projects has to be further intensified. The changes in the financing of the road infrastructure (shift from Public Private Partnership (PPP) towards EU funding), resulted in delays. However, in the time of fiscal austerity the shift from PPP projects towards EU funding will reduce the pressure on the general government budget expenditure in the following years and increase financial efficiency of infrastructure building in Slovakia.

Since the end of 2009, the number of finished projects as well as projects in implementation has gained momentum. However, the number of finished projects in the respective areas of intervention did not reach the necessary critical mass to provide the evidence for substantial structural changes on national and/or regional level. As an example of good practice, the most significant progress has been achieved in the Regional Operational Programme in the priority axis Infrastructure of education, where a significant number of education infrastructure has been upgraded.

OP Transport

The OP is providing support in seven priority axes in the area of transport infrastructure and has the largest financial allocation of all operational programmes. The construction of high-quality transport infrastructure is an important step for improving access to the least developed regions, increase regional and intra-regional mobility thus creating the precondition for faster regional convergence (25% of the overall allocation being spent in Eastern Slovakia). Funding is provided mainly from the Cohesion Fund (73%). At the end of 2010, the implementation of projects resulted in additional 22.6 km of roads.

Summary of achievements by priority axes:

PA 1 – Rail infrastructure**Summary of projects**

- The modernisation of the Žilina – Krásno nad Kysucou railway with implementation rate at 95% at the end of 2010.
- The modernisation of the Nové Mesto nad Váhom – Púchov railway. The modernisation is carried out through three national projects, covering the individual stages of the railway corridor. The highest implementation rate has been achieved in the Nové Mesto – Zlatovce stage (project) with implementation rate at 18.5%. The rest of the projects are still in the preparation phase.
- The Žilina Teplička junction with implementation rate at 44.8%. The aim of this project is to increase financial efficiency of rail transport, development of services, and modernisation of rail facilities and concentrate the trains service and operation from Žilina and Vrútky stations to one place.

The rest of the projects reported in the AIR are still in the preparation phase. The value of contracted projects approved by the managing authority covers 73% of priority axis allocation.

PA 2 – Road infrastructure (TEN-T)

- The D3 motorway – Hričovské podhradie – Žilina Strážov with implementation rate at 79.7%.
- The D1 Sverepec – Vrtižer motorway with implementation rate at 79.9%.
- The D1 Studenec – Behárovce with implementation rate at 72.7%.
- The D1 Jánovce – Jablonov, D1 Fričovce Svinia, D1 Turany – Hubová, D1 Hubová – Ivachnová, D3 Čadca – Svrčinovec, D1 Prešov west – Prešov south, D3 Kysucké Nové Mesto – Osčadnica are in the preparation phase.

The implementation of projects resulted in an increase of motorways length by 12.9 km (D1 Sverepec – Vrtižer and D1 Studenec – Behárovce). The share of contracted projects reached only 33.6% and financial implementation reached 25.9% on total priority axis allocation. The large number of newly started projects will contribute to higher share of commitments in following years, however, the projects are still in early stages of preparation.

Since the end of 2009, no progress has been achieved in PA 3 – Infrastructure of intermodal transport and PA 4 – Infrastructure of integrated transport systems¹³.

PA 5 – Road infrastructure (expressways and 1st class roads)

At the end of 2010, one project had been implemented (R1 Žarnovica – Šášovské Podhradie) and 6 projects had been contracted. The share of contracted projects reached 28.3% and financial implementation reached 15.8% of the priority axis allocation.

PA 6 – Public rail transportation

One project is being implemented focused on the purchase of new trains for regional and suburban public transportation. The financial implementation reached 11.3% share on priority axis allocation at the end of 2010.

Regional Operational Programme

In PA 5 – *Regional roads ensuring transport serviceability of the regions* four projects have been finished and 36 projects are being implemented. The already finished projects contributed to the reconstruction of 65 km of second and third class roads in the respective regions.

OP Bratislava region

No progress has been achieved in the measure 1.2 Regional and urban public transport, which led to reallocation of financial resources (EUR 6 million) to measure 1.1 Regeneration of settlements.

European Territorial Cooperation Objective

The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Slovakia – Czech Republic

Although the AIR has not reported significant problems in project implementation, the interim evaluation carried out in 2010 highlighted some important issues:

- The financial allocation of approved project has exceeded the intended financial allocation (the average value of projects is EUR 220,000 to EUR 1.2 million). As a result of this development the target values of output indicator – Number of supported projects will not be fulfilled. The remainder of the financial allocation should be focused on activity field I.2 – Cooperation and Networking with maximum budget at EUR 100,000 per project.
- In the second priority axis, the programme should put more emphasis on activities with higher multiplier effects in activity field II.3 – *Improvement of information and communication accessibility of the border regions*).

¹³ In PA 4 – The construction of public intermodal transport terminals in Žilina, Leopoldov, Bratislava and Košice is still in very early stage with negligible physical and financial implementation at the end of 2010. Only four projects in the form of technical – economic studies have been carried out in PA4. Some of the planned projects have been cancelled and are supposed to be started in the next programming period. The whole priority axis is being subject to revision.

Table C – Value of selected output and impact indicators by the end of 2010

Indicator	Type	Value
Number of supported projects	Output	43
Length of new or upgraded tourist tracks, cycle tracks and pathways	Output	239
Number of partners involved in cross border activities	Output	96
Length of new or upgraded roads	Output	46
Number of created and maintained cross border partnership	Impact	54

The CBC programme is being implemented in the framework of three priority axes¹⁴. The financial implementation of the programme reached 18.2% (EUR 16.8 million) at the end of 2010.

Table D – Convergence objective – main indicators and achievements (by end-2010)

Policy area	Main indicators	Outcomes and results
Enterprise support and RTDI	New jobs created (OP CaEG priority axis 2)	251 jobs (5,862 expected)
	Researchers benefiting from support	1,459
	Number of publications in scientific journals	608.7
	Number of technologically appreciated R&D institutions	98
	Number of projects connecting R&D and enterprise sector	138
Transport and telecommunications	New motorways, express ways and first class roads	9.7 km expressway and first class roads e.g. motorway R1 Žarnovica – Šášovské Podhradie.; 12.9 km of motorway – D1 Sverepec – Vrtižer and D1 Studenec – Behárovce.
	Reconstruction of existing roads (second and third class roads)	65 km (covered by the ROP)
Environment and energy	Additional energy generation capacity from RES	23.35 MW
	Increase of revenue from RES	34.9 %
Territorial development	New jobs created in tourism	143 (1,094 expected from projects contracted projects)
	Number of patients hospitalised in modernised facilities	15,378 (value for PA1 and PA2 of OP Health)
	Average period of hospitalisation	4.57 (in 2010),
	Number of beds operated in the modernised facilities increased from	919 beds (created 122 new jobs.)
	Total area of reconstructed healthcare facilities	66,452 sq. m. (value for PA1 and PA2 of OP Health)
	Number of modernised education facilities	186
	Number of children benefiting from new services provided by elementary schools	915
	Number of children benefiting from new services provided by upgraded pre-school facilities	109

¹⁴ PA 1 – Support of social, cultural and economic development and cooperation in the cross border region (54% of total funding) and PA2 – Development of the cross border region accessibility and environment (40.0% of total funding) and PA 3 – Technical assistance.

Table E – Competitiveness and Employment objective – OP Bratislava region

Policy area	Main indicators	Outcomes and results
Enterprise support and RTDI	Number of start-ups supported	2 (Generally, the number of start-ups contributing to the value of this indicator is low)
	Number of projects seeking to promote innovation and technology transfer in SMEs	49 (The majority of projects are technology transfer, with a 5 year investment horizon. The enterprises prefer to focus on this kind of projects, due to economic uncertainty).
	New jobs created	9 (The number of already contracted projects should increase the number of new jobs to 69 (28 women and 41 men)
	Number of project focused on informatisation of society	30 (21 in implementation and 9 finished)
Territorial development (Urban areas, tourism, rural development, cultural heritage, health, public security, local development)	Number of regenerated settlements	35
	Number of projects supporting tourism activities	1 (cyclotrail from Bernolákovo to Ivanka pri Dunaji.)

At the end of 2010, a still significant share of Cohesion Policy programmes was financed in form of non-repayable grants. Other instruments are still playing a rather marginal role. Besides non-repayable grants, the launch of the JEREMIE initiative is expected to provide additional form of financing in the following years.

3. EFFECTS OF INTERVENTION

In 2009, the majority of operational programmes were at an early stage of implementation, most of the programmes reported only minor progress which made it difficult to provide any tangible evidence or effects. Some of the programmes reported progress in some indicators, though in many cases the values reported were minimal or zero.

Although the implementation of Cohesion Policy programmes gained momentum in 2010 (mainly in the number of contracted projects and projects being implemented), it is still difficult to provide any evidence on significant impact of completed projects on regional or national level.

The most significant progress has been achieved in enterprise support and RTDI activities, transport and in the area of territorial development (especially public education infrastructure and health). The investments into public infrastructure on regional level (under the Regional OP) helped to offset the negative impact of the financial and economic crisis, by maintaining employment in construction sector and improving the quality of public infrastructure in regions. The expenditure on education infrastructure is increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and improving the educational process by introducing ICT.

The support by OP R&D is providing significant amount of financial resources to otherwise a highly underfinanced R&D sector in Slovakia¹⁵. The main beneficiaries of support are the institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, universities and other research institutes. The support is focused on specific research projects and purchase of new scientific equipment.

Similarly, the implementation of OP Health is significantly increasing the quality of healthcare by investing into modernisation of healthcare infrastructure and equipment.

In the European territorial cooperation objective several new cross border partnerships have been created and maintained and a lot of projects fostering the cross border cooperation have been completed or are being implemented.

The fact that the Cohesion Policy programmes are helping regions to respond to major long-term challenges (globalisation, demographic changes, climate change, and energy security) is difficult to prove, due to small number of finished projects and low value of reported indicators. Nevertheless, under current economic circumstances, the Cohesion Policy is helping to respond to short-term challenges, mainly by substituting the national resources.

4. EVALUATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICE IN EVALUATION

The evaluation culture in Slovakia is developing slowly as in the majority of the other EEC countries. The evaluation processes are still not integrated into policy making and the use of evaluation is rather seen as a necessary obligation with no existing coherent evaluation strategy. The introduction of Cohesion Policy support and the obligation to perform evaluations of EU funded projects created pressure on domestic institutions and laid foundations for the evolution of domestic evaluation capacity and culture.

The low level of financial implementation at the end of 2010 did not create demand for more sophisticated evaluations focused on effects or achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes.

The eleven operational programmes are being evaluated on the basis of existing individual evaluation plans. Since the end of 2010, all evaluations have been focused solely on the evaluation of individual operational programmes and related to internal procedures of monitoring and implementation. Although it is certainly important to fine-tune the existing system a shift to more in-depth evaluation of physical indicators should be the priority in the future.

Compared to other countries the capacity for undertaking evaluations is still insufficient due to above mentioned facts. Institutional instability (due to political involvement), the turnover of civil servants responsible for evaluation on the side of managing authorities and fragmentation of responsibilities for evaluations are other important factors which are negatively influencing the whole evaluation system.

¹⁵ In 2008, the expenditure on R&D amounted only to 0.47% of GDP.

Table F – List of evaluations

Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope	Main objectives	Main findings	Full reference or link to publication
Evaluation of the performance of the Intermediary Body under the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme Bratislava Region (31.5.2011 – external evaluation)	Assessment of existing administrative capacities	Evaluation of the performance of the Intermediary body under the Managing Authority for the OPBR. Assessment of support provided by the MA to the IB to help carry out the delegated competences.	The current implementation system of the delegated competences is appropriate. The IB should be given an opportunity assess its utility by comparing costs and benefits of its own existence. The transparency of spent finance is sufficient.	http://www.opbk.sk/download.php?FNAME=1315381445.upl&ANAME=Evaluation+of+the+performance+of+the+Intermediary+Body+unter+the+Managing+Authority+for+the+Operational+Programme+Bratislava+Region+-+Sumary.pdf
Interim evaluation of the OP Bratislava region (June 2010–external evaluation)	Interim evaluation of the OP	Evaluation of: –Quality of implementation system –Economic efficiency of supported activities and expenditure –Barriers limiting absorption – Physical indicators – Financial implementation	Recommendations for concrete actions improving the implementation. Recommendations for reallocation of financial resources in individual priority themes (not priority axes). The recommendations will be included in the revision of the OP. The implementation system is functioning. No significant risks have been identified.	http://www.opbk.sk/download.php?FNAME=1309436839.upl&ANAME=priebezne+hodnotenie+OPBK.pdf
Interim evaluation of OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth (February 2010 – external evaluation)	Evaluation of the OP	Evaluation of OP implementation since the beginning of the programming period.	Positive development in OP implementation. Recommendation for changes in state aid scheme for innovation support (measure 1.3 Support of innovation activities in enterprises).	http://www.mhsr.sk/ext_dok-hodnotenie-op-kahr-feb2010/132559c?ext=orig
Evaluation of management and financial management of OP Informatisation of Society from the side of managing authority and intermediate body under			The management of OP is complex, adequate and sufficient. The identified discrepancies have no significant influence on the implementation. Recommendations for adjustments for MA and IBMA. The adjustment will be implemented in 2011.	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8127.pdf

Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope	Main objectives	Main findings	Full reference or link to publication
managing authority (June 2010 – external evaluation)				
Evaluation of measureable indicators of the OP Informatisation of Society (June 2011 – external)		Evaluation of existing measureable indicators.	The indicators lack unequivocal definition, collection methodology and reporting. The evaluation recommendation will be implemented in 2011.	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8123.pdf
Ad hoc evaluation of OP Informatisation of Society (March 2010)	Ad hoc evaluation of OP	Evaluation focused revision of the OP.	Recommendation for revision of the OP. Recommendation for changes in target values of selected measureable indicators.	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8128.pdf
Interim evaluation of Regional Operational Programme (April 2010)	Interim evaluation	Evaluation of: –Implementation system of the OP, –Efficiency of expenditures, –Progress in financial implementation, –Progress in fulfilment of objectives, –Impact of external factors on implementation.	Adjustments in the financial plan of the OP. Financial reallocation between priority axes 1.1 and 4.1. Reassessment of strategy in the area of social infrastructure, with respect to recent development in the EU. Create conditions for the implementation of JESSICA.	http://www.ropka.sk/download.php?FNAME=1281956952.upl&ANAME=Spr%C3%A1va+z+Pravideln%C3%A9ho+hodnotenia+ROP_apr%C3%AD_2010.pdf
Analysis of revision of ROP including proposal for concrete solutions for revision and impact of the revision on the strategy of the OP. (October 2010 – external)	Revision of the OP.	Evaluation of possibilities for OP revision based on comparison of baseline objectives of the OP and real implementation.	Adjustments in the financial plan of the OP. Financial reallocation between priority axes 1.1 and 4.1. Reassessment of strategy in the area of social infrastructure, with respect to recent development in the EU. Creation of conditions for the implementation of JESSICA. Creation of new priority axis – Košice – The European Capital of Culture	http://www.ropka.sk/download.php?FNAME=1288699549.upl&ANAME=Final+rev%C3%ADzia+ROP+EUFC+oktober+2010.pdf
Evaluation of efficiency of		Evaluation of efficiency of MA and	Lack of administrative capacity of financial	http://www.minedu.sk/data/

Title and date of completion	Policy area and scope	Main objectives	Main findings	Full reference or link to publication
MA and IBMA administration including financial management of the OP R&D (January 2011 – external)		IBMA administration including financial management of the OP R&D.	and project manager level, which increase the possibilities for mistakes. Bureaucratic procedures are discouraging potential applicants.	USERDATA/StrukturalneFondy/EFRR/DOC/HS–odnotenie_efektivnosti_fungovania_administracie_2010.pdf
Evaluation of measureable indicators and monitoring system of the OP R&D (February 2011 – external)		Evaluation of existing measureable indicators.	In general, the setting of the indicators is appropriate; however it is necessary to eliminate the duplicity of some indicators. Better adjustments in the ITMS information system. Chaotic use of indicators related to horizontal priorities.	http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/StrukturalneFondy/EFRR/DOC/HS–Zhodnotenie_spravnosti_nastavenia_indikatorov_2011+prilohy.zip
Evaluation of OP Health (March 2010 – external)	Interim evaluation of OP	Evaluation of the effectiveness and quality of the OP Health implementation as to 31 December 2009 and formulate relevant recommendations for the OPH Managing Authority.	The physical and financial implementation is satisfying. Partial discrepancy of indicators on project and programming level. Need for adjustments. Increase investments to systematic education of staff at MA.	http://opz.health-sf.sk/?file=11e8536f73bf47e45c3e5a274f590eba

The evaluations focus on the performance effectiveness and quality of the existing managing authorities or intermediate bodies under managing authorities, systems of physical indicators, achievement of the policy implementation and revision of existing operational programmes. The evaluations provide important feedback to managing authorities to improve the internal procedures and administration, identify the bottlenecks, and offer concrete recommendations for improvement.

The main methods used in the evaluations are based on qualitative methods. The evaluations using quantitative methods focus on the progress of implementation by identifying low-performing measures and/or activities in the priority axes of individual operational programmes.

The evaluations which were carried out last year (Table F) focused on the quality of existing physical indicators, internal management and/o administrative procedures, and efficiency of expenditure, by using a set of predefined evaluation questions. The absence of more sophisticated evaluations focused on actual achievements can be partly justified by the still low number of finished projects.

Most of the recommendations have already been or are being implemented by the managing authorities and in the programming documents. The AIRs of the OPs, which have been evaluated clearly state, that the majority of issues highlighted in the evaluations were or will be incorporated in the internal procedures of the respective operational programmes. For example, the evaluation of the Regional OP and the OP “Informatisation” of society provided important input to the revision of these operational programmes.

In April 2011, the National Monitoring Committee of the National Strategic Reference Framework adopted a comprehensive plan of evaluation for 2011 covering all operational programmes. Besides “traditional” evaluations (shown in Table F) focused on internal procedures and actual implementation, some of the planned evaluations will focus on the evaluation of strategic objectives of the NRSF and on the analysis of the effects of Cohesion Policy implementation on economic development using the macroeconomic HERMIN model (the actual development leads to the conclusion, that these evaluations will not be carried out in 2011). No evaluations exemplifying good practice were identified in 2010.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS – FUTURE CHALLENGES

In order to increase the efficiency of the policy in the remaining and the subsequent programming period, several issues need to be addressed (besides issues raised in last year’s country report which are still relevant):

- The Cohesion Policy programmes in the next programming period should be more concentrated and the number of operational programmes should be reduced. The large number of operational programmes and managing authorities leads to vulnerability of the whole system to political influence resulting in institutional instability and sub-optimal efficiency.

- Any intended future reallocation of financial support among the operational programmes should be carefully discussed with relevant stakeholders and thoroughly evaluated.
- The information related to implementation of Cohesion Policy programmes included in the ITMS information system should be open to public access not only for managing authorities, applicants or beneficiaries (e.g. the possibility to extract information by FOI codes and other specific criteria from the system for further analysis). This could greatly increase transparency and public control over the policy.
- The system of monitoring indicators should be modified and streamlined in order to provide clear and reliable information on what is being achieved. The reporting of indicators should be carried out in a more coherent way. At present, it is extremely demanding to synthesize the indicators from the AIRs and to provide a clear picture of what has been achieved.
- The system of public procurement on the national level should be greatly improved in terms of efficiency and transparency (e.g. increasing the administrative capacity of the Office for Public Procurement).
- The results of evaluation activities focusing on internal administrative, procedural and implementation issues indicate that the existing system is still being fine-tuned. It is necessary to learn from this programming period and introduce fundamental changes in the following period especially as regards the number of operational programmes.

REFERENCES

Nation-wide evaluations across operational programmes

No nation-wide evaluations across operational programmes have been carried out.

Evaluations of specific operational programmes

Contracting authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Title	Interim evaluation of the OP Bratislava region
Type	external evaluation by ALPEX export-import s.r.o.
Carried out	2010
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.opbk.sk/download.php?FNAME=1309436839.upl&ANAME=priebezne+hodnotenie+OPBK.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Economy
Title	Interim evaluation of OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth
Type	External by EMARK s.r.o.
Carried out	2010
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.mhsr.sk/ext_dok-hodnotenie-op-kahr-feb2010/132559c?ext=orig
Contracting authority	Ministry of Finance
Title	Ad hoc evaluation of OP Informatisation of Society
Type	external by EUROFORMES, a.s. and AJG Consulting s.r.o.
Carried out	2010
Method	
Reference	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8128.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Title	Interim evaluation of Regional Operational Programme
Type	external by Alpex export-import s.r.o.
Carried out	April 2010
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.ropka.sk/download.php?FNAME=1281956952.upl&ANAME=Spr%C3%A1va+z+Pravideln%C3%A9ho+hodnotenia+ROP_apr%C3%AD_2010.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Health
Title	Interim Evaluation of OP Health
Type	external by Consulting Associates, s.r.o.
Carried out	March 2010
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://opz.health-sf.sk/?file=11e8536f73bf47e45c3e5a274f590eba

Evaluations of specific aspects of operational programmes

Contracting authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak republic
Title	Evaluation of the performance of the Intermediary Body under the Managing Authority for the Operational Programme Bratislava Region
Type	external evaluation by KPMG Slovakia
Carried out	2011
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.opbk.sk/download.php?FNAME=1315381445.upl&ANAME=Evaluation+of+the+performance+of+the+Intermediary+Body+unter+the+Managing+Authority+for+the+Operational+Programme+Bratislava+Region+-+Summary.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Finance
Title	Evaluation of management and financial management of OP Informatisation of Society from the side of managing authority and intermediate body under managing authority
Type	external by EUROFORMES, a.s. and Jenewein Slovakia s.r.o.
Carried out	2011
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8127.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Finance
Title	Evaluation of measureable indicators of the OP Informatisation of Society
Type	external by EUROFORMES, a.s. and Jenewein Slovakia s.r.o.
Carried out	2009
Method	Evaluation question, Logical framework approach
Reference	http://www.opis.gov.sk/data/files/8123.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Title	Analysis of revision of ROP including proposal for concrete solutions for revision and impact of the revision on the strategy of the OP. (October 2010 – external)
Type	external by EUFC s.r.o.
Carried out	October 2010
Method	
Reference	http://www.ropka.sk/download.php?FNAME=1288699549.upl&ANAME=Final+rev%C3%ADzia+ROP+EUFC+oktober+2010.pdf
Contracting authority	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
Title	Evaluation of efficiency of MA and IBMA administration including financial management of the OP R&D
Type	external by IBS Slovakia, s.r.o.
Carried out	December 2010
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/StrukturalneFondy/EFRR/DOC/H S-Zhodnotenie_efektivnosti_fungovania_administracie_2010.pdf

Contracting authority	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
Title	Evaluation of measureable indicators and monitoring system of the OP R&D
Type	external by IBS Slovakia, s.r.o.
Carried out	January 2011
Method	Evaluation questions
Reference	http://www.minedu.sk/data/USERDATA/StrukturalneFondy/EFRR/DOC/H S-Zhodnotenie_spravnosti_nastavenia_indikatorov_2011+prilohy.zip

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Výročná správa o implementácii Programu cezhraničnej spolupráce Slovenská republika – Česká republika 2007 – 2013 za rok 2010, Ministerstvo pôdohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Zdravotníctvo za rok 2010, Ministerstvo zdravotníctva SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Veda a Výskum za rok 2010, Ministerstvo školstva, vedy, výskumu a športu SR

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Regionálneho operačného programu za rok 2010, Ministerstvo pôdohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Doprava za rok 2010, Ministerstvo dopravy, výstavby a regionálneho rozvoja

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Konkurencieschopnosť a hospodársky rast za rok 2010, Ministerstvo hospodárstva SR

Výročná Správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Informatizácia spoločnosti za rok 2010, Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Bratislavský kraj za rok 2010, Ministerstvo pôdohospodárstva a rozvoja vidieka

Výročná správa o vykonávaní Operačného programu Životné prostredie za rok 2010, Ministerstvo životného prostredia

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TABLES

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Table 1 – Regional disparities and trends

Table 2 – Macro-economic developments

Table 3 – Financial allocation by main policy area

Table 3 CBC – Financial allocation by main policy area

Table 4 – Commitments by main policy area (by end-2010)

Table 4 CBC – Commitments by main policy area (by end-2010)

Annex Table A – Broad policy areas and correspondence with fields of intervention (FOI)

Policy area		Code	Priority themes
1. Enterprise environment	RTDI and linked activities	01	R&TD activities in research centres
		02	R&TD infrastructure and centres of competence in a specific technology
		05	Advanced support services for firms and groups of firms
		07	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation (...)
		74	Developing human potential in the field of research and innovation, in particular through post-graduate studies ...
	Innovation support for SMEs	03	Technology transfer and improvement of cooperation networks ...
		04	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs (including access to R&TD services in research centres)
		06	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes (...)
		09	Other measures to stimulate research and innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs
		14	Services and applications for SMEs (e-commerce, education and training, networking, etc.)
		15	Other measures for improving access to and efficient use of ICT by SMEs
	ICT and related services	11	Information and communication technologies (...)
		12	Information and communication technologies (TEN-ICT)
		13	Services and applications for citizens (e-health, e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, etc.)
	Other investment in firms	08	Other investment in firms
2. Human resources	Education and training	62	Development of life-long learning systems and strategies in firms; training and services for employees ...
		63	Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work
		64	Development of special services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors ...

Policy area		Code	Priority themes
	Labour market policies	72	Design, introduction and implementing of reforms in education and training systems ...
		73	Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle ...
		65	Modernisation and strengthening labour market institutions
		66	Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market
		67	Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives
		68	Support for self-employment and business start-up
		69	Measures to improve access to employment and increase sustainable participation and progress of women ...
		70	Specific action to increase migrants' participation in employment ...
		71	Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people ...
		80	Promoting the partnerships, pacts and initiatives through the networking of relevant stakeholders
3. Transport	Rail	16	Railways
		17	Railways (TEN-T)
		18	Mobile rail assets
		19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)
	Road	20	Motorways
		21	Motorways (TEN-T)
		22	National roads
		23	Regional/local roads
	Other transport	24	Cycle tracks
		25	Urban transport
		26	Multimodal transport
		27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)
		28	Intelligent transport systems
		29	Airports
		30	Ports
		31	Inland waterways (regional and local)
		32	Inland waterways (TEN-T)
4. Environment and energy	Energy infrastructure	33	Electricity
		34	Electricity (TEN-E)
		35	Natural gas
		36	Natural gas (TEN-E)
		37	Petroleum products
		38	Petroleum products (TEN-E)
		39	Renewable energy: wind
		40	Renewable energy: solar
		41	Renewable energy: biomass
		42	Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal and other
		43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management
	Environment and risk prevention	44	Management of household and industrial waste
		45	Management and distribution of water (drink water)
		46	Water treatment (waste water)

Policy area		Code	Priority themes
		47	Air quality
		48	Integrated prevention and pollution control
		49	Mitigation and adaption to climate change
		50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
		51	Promotion of biodiversity and nature protection (including Natura 2000)
		52	Promotion of clean urban transport
		53	Risk prevention (...)
		54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks
5. Territorial development	Social Infrastructure	10	Telephone infrastructures (including broadband networks)
		75	Education infrastructure
		76	Health infrastructure
		77	Childcare infrastructure
		78	Housing infrastructure
		79	Other social infrastructure
	Tourism and culture	55	Promotion of natural assets
		56	Protection and development of natural heritage
		57	Other assistance to improve tourist services
		58	Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage
		59	Development of cultural infrastructure
		60	Other assistance to improve cultural services
	Planning and rehabilitation	61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration
	Other	82	Compensation of any additional costs due to accessibility deficit and territorial fragmentation
		83	Specific action addressed to compensate additional costs due to size market factors
		84	Support to compensate additional costs due to climate conditions and relief difficulties
6. Technical assistance		81	Mechanisms for improving good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation ...
		85	Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection
		86	Evaluation and studies; information and communication

Annex Table B – Changes in allocation of Regional OP in 2011

Priority axis	Allocation 2011 (EUR million)	Allocation 2007 (EUR million)	Change (EUR million)
Infrastructure of education	417.1	348.5	68.6
Infrastructure of social services, protection and social guardianship	211.3	229.5	-18.2
Strengthening the cultural potential of regions and tourism infrastructure	149.1	190.4	-41.3
Regeneration of settlements	510.6	478.4	32.2
Regional communications ensuring transport serviceability of the regions	161.2	153.0	8.2
Technical assistance	45.2	45.2	0.0
European capital of culture – Košice 2013	60.0	–	60.0
Total	1,554.5	1,445.0	109.5

Source: www.ropka.sk