

Draft Partnership Agreement of the Slovak Republic for the years 2021-2027
Article 10(6)¹

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1. Selection of policy objectives and the JTF specific objective

Reference: point (a) of Article 11(1)

Table 1: Selection of policy objective and JTF specific objective with justification

Cohesion Policy Objective	Programme	Fund	Justification for selection of a policy objective or JTF-specific objective [3 500 per objective]
PO1	Pogramme Slovakia	ERDF	<p>After Slovakia's accession to the European Union in 2004, Slovak GDP grew at an average rate of 5.1% per year until 2011 – the highest from among the V4 countries (CZ = 3.2%, HU = 2.2%, PL = 3.9%, EU 27 = 1.4%). Slovakia thus converged swiftly to the EU27 average. Between 2011 and 2020, the Slovak economy grew the slowest within the V4, only 1.6% per year (CZ = 1.8%, HU = 2.3%, PL = 1.9% and EU 27 = 0.7%). Slovakia thus has been catching up with the EU27 average the slowest from the V4 countries. This trend is mainly due to the fact that the Slovak economy has not been able to switch to growth based on innovation and research. The following priorities will lead to overcoming these negative trends and help to eliminate or mitigate these adverse events:</p> <p>Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low intensity of cooperation between the public and private sectors and a constantly declining share of Slovak businesses with innovative activity in the total number of companies (decrease from 35.6% in 2010 to 30.5% in 2018); • Lagging behind in the intensity of R & D & I spending, not only on the EU average and among innovation leaders, but also in the environment of moderate innovators, especially in comparison with direct competition in V4 countries. In 2019, Slovakia spent 0.83% of GDP on R&D, while the EU27 spent 2.19% of GDP; • Inadequately set legislative, organisational and procedural environment as a hurdle for a substantial increase in R&D expenditure which would reach at least the level of the other three V4 countries average, with the aim of gradually increasing corporate R&D expenditure to reach the target of 65% of total R&D expenditure; • Absence of the needs-driven, real, operationally sustainable, shared and cooperative infrastructure for the research, development and innovations reflecting regional and supra-regional needs, in accordance with the smart specialisation of the SR, focusing on its

¹ As regards the ERDF, only table 2 in section 8 is relevant for European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg), while all the information in the remaining sections and tables concern only the Investment for jobs and growth goal.

			<p>optimization to ensure RIS3 transformation goals, concentration of resources and possibilities of use, in line with the needs of economic practice aimed at ensuring a carbon-neutral and circular economy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient infrastructure, limited access to technological innovation, lack of process innovations, insufficient transfer of R&D results into practice in all areas (e.g. sluggish transfer of new trends into biomedical research); • Low participation in the European research area (ERA) (Slovakia is one of the least successful EU member countries in the framework programmes); • Low share of doctoral students, university researchers and administrative staff in academic mobility schemes. <p>Reaping the benefits of digitization for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low position of the SR in the evaluation of the state of the digital economy and society of the European Commission (DESI 2020, DESI 2021), in both years, 22nd position among EU countries, plus year-on-year decline and the need to create conditions for gradual digital transformation of all sectors of the economy and society (especially the need of transformation to Industry 4.0); • Insufficient synchronisation of public administration processes with the possibilities of the digital society, creation of conditions for support of "pro futuro" dynamic goal-oriented regulations, simplification of business processes and creation of modern regulation adapted to the digital age, including elimination of red tape in processes and relations with entrepreneurs and citizens; • Increasing the number of people living in cities and people living in the vicinity of economically strong municipalities brings problems resulting from the burden on all aspects related to municipal activities providing services for residents, investors, tourists or entrepreneurs; • Weak or absent connections among various areas of use of smart solutions and unused potential of smart technologies aimed at improving functional and sustainable urban infrastructure and increasing the living standards of urban and regional residents through the development of Smart Cities and Smart Regions; • Risks resulting from insufficient infrastructure safety. <p>Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs, including by productive investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High rate of defunct entities (9.7% above the EU average) and insufficient longevity rate of these entities within first two years from their establishment; • The growing dependence of the Slovak economy on narrow specialisation with high volatility in times of crisis and contributing to the increase in unemployment; • The need to stimulate the transformation of the Slovak economy by applying the green and digital transformation in order to eliminate the growing dependence of the Slovak economy on narrow specialisation with high volatility in times of crisis; • Absence of a system of special measures to eliminate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on enterprises, to support and develop SMEs and strengthen their innovative capacity, as well as absence of activities aimed at supporting the networking of SMEs and their cooperation with research and innovation centres; • The need to make more intensive use of various forms of financial instruments and tailor-made support services to strengthen the competitiveness and growth of SMEs; • The need to create conditions to support investment in high value-added technologies, including circular and carbon-neutral technologies.
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			<p>Skills development for smart specialization, industrial transformation and entrepreneurship - human resources for innovative Slovakia and the EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous degradation of the education system, manifested mainly by not reflecting the needs of the labour market in the curriculum at all levels of education, the huge outflow of university students abroad (in 2018, 19% of all Slovak university students studied full-time abroad); as well as by the conditions in the field of research and development; • Low responsiveness of education and training system to sector-based needs indicated by the persistence of skills mismatches (58% and 47% of secondary and tertiary graduates working in occupations not corresponding to their fields of study) and skills gaps (low level of skills and competences of graduates)²; • The inability of the current education system to respond flexibly to societal challenges, demographic trends and changing production methods, changes in the structure of the economy, changes in consumer behaviour, and changes caused by digitization and automation. High risk of job automation (34% of jobs at risk of automation and 31% of jobs facing changes due to automation) and changes to the demand for skills caused by automation and digitization, a need to adjust and expand higher education, vocational and adult learning opportunities for skills development, re-skilling and up-skilling; • Shortages of skilled workforce in key industry sectors also due to continuous emigration of working-age population (e.g. outflows of 19% secondary and 10% tertiary graduates) with skills needed; • Limited cooperation between enterprises and skills providers, a need for a more active involvement of the industry in formulation and provision of education at regional level. <p>Enhancing digital connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below-average indicators in the area of connectivity, mainly in fixed broadband coverage and in the rate of use of fast broadband coverage (DESI); • Up to 12% of households do not have access to standard fixed broadband connection, compared to 3% of the EU average (one of the lowest in the EU); • Ensuring fixed and wireless broadband connections with a very high capacity in Slovakia, in accordance with the EU strategy for a gigabit society / and Digital Compass, is a necessary prerequisite for the future competitiveness of the SR; • The set goals cannot be achieved only through investments into optical networks of competing commercial entities; • Low current coverage of Slovakia by ultra-fast broadband at the address/household level (32.31%, while 58.54% has been planned); • Low coverage of ultra-fast broadband connections of schools, institutions, companies in places of the commercial telecommunications market failure.
PO 2	Programme Slovakia OP Fisheries	ERDF/CF/ EMFAF	<p>Slovakia fully supports the carbon neutrality goals by 2050 and a strict environmental protection. For a successful transformation to a greener and carbon-neutral Slovakia, it is necessary to target investments to several areas and eliminate or mitigate several adverse elements, aspects and limitations.</p> <p>Promoting energy efficiency, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, RES and development of intelligent energy systems;</p>

² Trexima (2020): Employment of high school and university graduates according to the performance of a specific job according to SK ISCO-08 (adequate, inadequate) in 2019; e.g. OECD Skills Strategy Slovak Republic (2020); Global competitiveness report

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National energy targets expressed in the National Energy and Climate Plan for years 2021- 2030 (NECP), including related measures and their amendments following to the EU climate objectives under the Fit for 55 Package, once adopted by the Member States; • Insufficient degree of interconnection of obligations of the SR arising from EU directives on energy efficiency, energy efficiency of buildings and RES, from EU legislation and international conventions in the field of the environment, strategic documents³ and measures needed to achieve these goals with the needs of individual regions; • Ambitious challenge for the SR to create a greener, low-carbon and at the same time competitive economy aimed at fulfilling the commitment of carbon neutrality by 2050; • Insufficient or absent system of coordination and planning of the development of sustainable energy at regional level, and implementation of projects in the field of energy efficiency and RES use, and insufficient energy management at the level of self-governments; • High-energy and resource intensity of industry; • Low pace of the renovation of public buildings their insufficient overall renovation, and insufficient application of green and circular economy elements of renovation of buildings; • Low rate of cost-effective comprehensive renovation of residential buildings⁴; • Low level of management, automation, monitoring and smart systems in the buildings aimed at savings; • Insufficient equipment of companies and consumers with measuring and control technology for the implementation of SMART technologies, including smart grids; • Low preparedness to increase RES share in energy carriers, e.g. by adding RES to natural gas, or by replacing natural gas with RES; • Insufficient dimension of electricity infrastructure in terms of e-mobility requirements, use of RES, energy storage, energy efficiency and requirements for digitalization and smart grids; • Excessive dimension of heat sources and heat distribution in centralised supply systems, especially due to the energy intensity in buildings from the 1970s and 1980s and the low share of RES in the systems. <p>Adapting to climate change, risk prevention and disaster resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme weather events, especially long periods of drought associated with lack of water, torrential rains causing mainly floods or landslides; • Growing manifestation of climate change in Slovakia, requiring new measures to eliminate the risks related to potential disasters and the high risk of forest fires; • Growing damage to the environment caused by insufficient prevention of risks resulting from the violations of legislation (environmental crime). <p>Improving water quality and water supply status and wastewater treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete water supply infrastructure, also in terms of meeting the obligations of the SR towards the EU, arising from Council Directive 91/271/EEC, and shortcomings in the state of obsolete infrastructure. <p>Transition to the circular economy with emphasis on waste management</p>
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³ Long-term Renovation Strategy (LTRS); <https://www.mindop.sk/ministerstvo-1/vystavba-5/stavebnictvo/dokumenty-a-materialy>

⁴ LTRS, p. 27

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low rate of waste recycling and high dependence on landfill, low rate of biodegradable waste recovery, the need to improve support for waste prevention and increase material efficiency and support of transition to circular economy, the need to increase municipal waste sorting and waste recycling; • Low recovery rate of biodegradable municipal waste. <p>Protection of nature, landscape, biodiversity and ecosystem services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient implementation of activities aimed at the protection of habitats and species, especially in the network of Natura 2000 (also due to the previous non-use of Natura 2000 payments and aqua-environmental schemes), as well as the creation of green infrastructure and compliance with EU directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC and international obligations; • The need to create new green and blue infrastructure in urban areas not only due to climate change, but especially due to the loss of biodiversity in the urban areas and their immediate vicinity; • Insufficiently developed environmental awareness, environmental enlightenment and information, and the lack of environmental centers; • Occurrence of neglected and unused localities in urban areas⁵. <p>Ensuring the exploration, remediation and monitoring of environmental burdens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of environmental burdens; • Occurens of the areas of environmental burdens that have not yet been explored and monitored. <p>Improving air quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem of air quality – mainly pollution caused by dust particles from domestic heating, emissions from large and medium stationary sources; • High share of transport in NOX emissions and air pollution in towns and cities; • Obligations of the SR arising from the Directive of the EP and the Council of the EU 2016/2284 - reduction of NOx emissions by 36% by 2029 and by 50% starting from 2030. <p>Sustainable multimodal urban mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory technical and qualitative condition of transport infrastructure, track based urban transport (tram, trolleybus) in large agglomerations with a number of location and section restrictions, including a low degree of interconnection and coordination of individual transport modes (absence of functional integrated transport systems); • Unsatisfactory level of infrastructure for the repair and maintenance of the rolling stock of track urban public transport and bus urban and suburban public passenger transport; • Insufficient quality and quantity of public passenger terminals and stops, including passenger information systems; • Lack of safe cycling infrastructure of the relevant quality, and low rate of planning of cycling infrastructure; • Absent P+R, B+R, K+R parking systems in cities and urban agglomerations; • Insufficient preference for public passenger transport at intersections, including the lack of reserved lanes;
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⁵ The Urban Development Policy of the Slovak Republic by 2030
<https://www.mindop.sk/uploads/media/177add300b0faa6f4201a4d8a240021e77552653.pdf>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory technical and qualitative condition of vehicle fleet of the part of track urban public transport and bus urban and suburban public passenger transport. <p>EMFAF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fish consumption (fresh water and also marine fish) in the conditions of the SR; • Low number of entities involved in aquaculture and fish farming and the processing of fishery and aquaculture products; absence of producers; • Lack of innovation, low digitalisation, insufficient control and enforcement of fisheries and inefficient data collection; • Need to promote and enhance the marketing, quality, added value of aquaculture products and processing of these products; • Need to contribute to protection of nature, landscape, biodiversity and ecosystem services.
PO 3	Programme Slovakia	ERDF/CF	<p>Slovakia needs to complete and modernize transport infrastructure at both European and national levels in order to increase the competitiveness of its regions, improve the mobility of its population and freight transport, and to stimulate the associated potential for economic growth and employment. Below is the list of priority areas under this policy objective and short justification of proposed investments:</p> <p>Road transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfinished motorways and expressways included in the TEN-T network, which do not allow high-quality and fast transport connections between regions/neighbouring countries, have a negative impact on economic development, the environment and road safety, and constitute an obstacle to population mobility; • Qualitative and quantitative parameters of the transport systems of the SR do not reflect the current and forecasted transport intensity and the needs of the economy development; • Commitments of the SR resulting from the Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 of the EP and the Council of the EU – completion of the essential TEN-T network by 2030 and the comprehensive TEN-T by 2050; • Inadequate and even emergency condition of significant part of main roads (first- class roads); • Exceeded traffic loads on several sections of main roads included in the planned routes of motorways and expressways; • Non-existence of road bypasses of towns and municipalities on roads with intensive heavy traffic - negative effects as noise and emission burden for the population in towns and municipalities; • Time losses in exposed sections of main roads resulting from exceeding the road capacity; • Unsatisfactory construction and technical condition of bridges on main roads (first- class roads), which are strategically important for internal urban, transit and regional transport; • Existence of critical accident sites and collision points on main roads, reflected in a reduced level of road safety; • Inadequate technical and qualitative condition of the infrastructure of secondary roads (Class II and III) and local roads, which has a negative impact on safety and the development of integrated public transport. <p>Rail transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate technical and qualitative condition of the railway infrastructure included in the TEN-T network, as well as regional lines with a number of transitional line speed restrictions and interoperability limitations, including unsatisfactory accessibility for

			<p>persons with reduced mobility, which also hampers the effective implementation of integrated public transport;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient functionality of railway junctions in Bratislava, Žilina and Košice, resulting in time loss and operational limitations; • Low share of electrified lines and the resulting untapped ecological potential of railway transport; • Lower level of railway transport safety – mainly on regional lines – due to frequent level crossings, non-existence of control points, outdated safety and security systems; • Inadequate technical and qualitative condition of public intermodal transport infrastructure (terminals), low supply of public terminals network and their connections with logistics; • Insufficient infrastructure for the maintenance (control and preparation) of rolling stock for the railway passenger transport operating in the public service; • Inadequate technical and qualitative condition of the part of vehicle fleet of regional railway public passenger transport. <p>Water transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of infrastructure and unsatisfactory technical and qualitative condition of water transport infrastructure (waterways and ports) included in the TEN-T network; • Out-dated inland navigation fleet, which has a negative effect on economic development, the environment and safety of navigation.
PO 4	Programme Slovakia	ESF+/ERDF	<p>The overall positive developments in Slovakia over recent years have been distorted by the COVID-19 pandemic not only on the labour market, which registers higher unemployment rates⁶ and deepening of regional disparities⁷, but also in the field of socio-economic situation of vulnerable persons (mainly children, young people, seniors, and members of marginalised communities) who are even more in danger of poverty and social exclusion. Long-lasting negative impacts of pandemic on education system^{8,9,10} are expected, while school closures¹¹ and fast introduction of online teaching have deepened already identified shortcomings of the education system¹². Digital and green transformation of the society counts</p>

⁶ According to the data of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, the total number of job seekers has been declining for a long time until 2020. In February 2020 it was about 5 thousand less than in February 2019. However, due to the pandemic, this number increased by more than 65 thousand between February 2020 and 2021 to a total of more than 234 thousand job seekers. The development of the number of young jobseekers under the age of 29 had a declining trend until 2020. Between February 2019 and 2020, the number of job seekers decreased by more than 900 and in total less than 40 thousand were registered. In the period from February 2020 to 2021, however, this number increased by almost 16 thousand. Between February 2019 and 2020, the number of long-term unemployed decreased by almost 7.5 thousand. Compared to the number of long-term unemployed between February 2020 and 2021, this declining trend was disrupted and, on the contrary, the number of long-term unemployed increased significantly. In terms of the national level, this increase amounted to more than 28 thousand persons, while the largest increase was recorded in the Prešov (more than 6 thousand) and Košice Region (more than 5.5 thousand). The share of unemployed people with low education has long been around 30% of the total number of unemployed. In February 2020, the number of job seekers with ISCED 0-2 education was a total of 56 thousand, which was by 3.5 thousand less than in February 2019. However, in February 2021 this number increased to 69 thousand which was an annual increase of 13 thousand job seekers.

⁷ When examining the data of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family in the period between February 2020 and 2021, the effects of the pandemic on the labour market are evident in practically all regions, but especially in the Prešov and Košice regions, where the number of jobseekers increased by more than 10,000. The number of job seekers in the Trenčín Region increased the least, by more than 6,000.

⁸ *Hlavné zistenia z dotazníkového prieskumu v základných a stredných školách o priebehu dištančnej výučby v školskom roku 2019/2020, IVP MŠVVaŠ SR*, <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/17338.pdf>

⁹ In the school year 2020/2021, almost 50% of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds / MRCs (359 out of 720) did not participate in full-time or distance education at the time of pandemic measures, because kindergartens did not provide any of the methods of education. *Vplyv pandemickej situácie na priebeh vzdelávania v materských školách v školskom roku 2020/2021, Štátna školská inšpekcia 2021*, https://www.ssi.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Dotaznik_priebeh_vzdelavania_MS_sprava_2020-2021.pdf

¹⁰ According to teachers in the 2nd grade of primary school, 81% of children typically took part in distance education on a regular basis, with almost 10% of children not taking part in distance education at all. 84.5% of teachers stated that pupils learned less curriculum during distance learning. Teachers have estimated that pupils are 2 months behind compared to regular classes. As a result of the pandemic, teachers most often experienced a deterioration in well-being (46%) and mental health (41%). *Správa z reprezentatívneho prieskumu o priebehu a dopade dištančnej výučby v školskom roku 2020/2021, Centrum vzdelávacích analýz 2021*, <https://www.vzdelavacieanalyzy.sk/?p=271>

¹¹ <https://www.minedu.sk/rozhodnutia-a-usmernenia-v-case-covid-19/>

¹² According to recalculations based on principal estimates and estimates of classroom teachers, 52,000 primary and secondary school pupils (7.5% of the student population) were not involved in distance education. Almost 128,000 pupils (18.5% of the student population) did not learn online (most of them were probably educated through other forms of distance learning, such as sending printed worksheets). *Hlavné zistenia z dotazníkového*

			<p>on ensuring of sufficient room for the development of relevant skills of not only working, but all the society members, including children and seniors.</p> <p>The support measures shall be formulated in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Right, while the following main challenges shall be taken into account:</p> <p>Adaptable and accessible labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent problems in the structure of unemployment; • Lack of more thorough profile of jobseekers; • The social economy sector has been so far providing employment opportunities for a relatively small number of disadvantaged people; • Low participation of parents of young children in the labour market; • Insufficient cooperation between public and non-public providers of employment service, and their connection with social services and electrification; • Almost 2/3 of jobs are at risk from automation and robotics, the changing labour market requires new skills, especially digital, even for pupils and students. <p>Quality inclusive education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency between the education and training systems and labour market requirements. Systems are not well prepared to respond to opportunities, and they do not provide quality inclusive education; • Unsatisfactory availability, accessibility and adaptability of education, also in terms of opportunities for non-formal education, education for a healthy lifestyle and sports activities; • Significant modernization debt and insufficient quality of school infrastructure at all levels of education, which limits the competitiveness of the Slovak education system at the international level and slows down the adaptation to the 21st century needs; • The education system is based on the acquisition of encyclopaedic knowledge instead of promoting critical thinking and developing soft skills; • Low enrolment rate in pre-primary education, limited offer and accessibility of services for children in early and pre-primary age, including for disadvantaged children; • Unattractive teaching profession, undergraduate training of pedagogical and professional staff is insufficient, there are no quality opportunities for further development of their professional competencies and digital skills, as well as a system for monitoring their educational needs • Unsatisfactory educational outcomes, which are significantly influenced by socio-economic background¹³¹⁴ or by a different
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prieskumu v základných a stredných školách o priebehu dištančnej výučby v školskom roku 2019/2020, IVP MŠVVaŠ SR, <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/17338.pdf>

¹³ The impact of the socio-economic background on the performance of Slovak pupils is stronger than in the OECD average. Národná správa PISA 2018, https://www.nucem.sk/dl/4636/Narodna_sprava_PISA_2018.pdf

¹⁴ Testovanie 9 2019 – Mathematics: The most successful in mathematics are students from the district of Bratislava I, who achieved a success rate of 78.8%, their results were strongly significantly better than the national average. Another group consists of districts that have achieved results that are significantly better than the national average, namely: Bratislava IV, Bratislava II, Považská Bystrica and Trenčín. The results are significantly worse than the national average in the districts: Gelnica, Revúca and Rožňava. The following districts also achieved mathematically significantly worse results than the national average: Rimavská Sobota, Veľký Krtíš, Sabinov, Poltár, Trebišov, Krupina, Sobrance, Medzilaborce and Košice - okolie. The difference between the results of pupils from the district of Bratislava I (78.8%) and from the district of Gelnica (44.7%) was 34.1 percentage points.

Slovak language and literature: The most successful of the Slovak language and literature are students from the district of Bratislava I, who achieved an average success rate of 74.3%, their results are strongly significantly better than the national average. The results significantly better than the national average were achieved by students in the districts: Bratislava II, Košice I and Bratislava IV. Pupils in the districts: Poltár and Revúca achieved significantly results significantly worse than the national average. The results in terms of materially significantly worse than the national average were achieved by students in the districts: Gelnica, Sabinov, Rožňava, Trebišov, Krupina, Kežmarok, Rimavská Sobota and Veľký Krtíš. The difference between the results of pupils from the Poltár district (49.2%) and Bratislava I (74.3%) was 25.1 percentage points. Testovanie 9 2019 –

			<p>mother tongue. In particular, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who lack the means to access to support and devices may be severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, increasing learning inequalities as a result¹⁵;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of early school leavers, mainly from disadvantaged groups; • Persistent segregation of Roma pupils in education, their high representation in special schools, and unequal treatment; • Increasing number of socio-pathological phenomena (bullying, low well-being, extremism, risky behaviour). <p>Skills for better adaptability and inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitization and decarbonisation have a significant impact on the economy and the workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated structural changes and the pace of green and digital transformation; • Weak financial support from the state for adult education. There is a lack of a unifying tool to support the adult population in further education; • Different approach of employers to the provision of education to employees. Lower participation of employees of small and medium sized enterprises and self-employed persons in further education compared to employees of larger companies; • There is a lack of concept of the development of basic, life skills and key competences, including digital skills, which reduces the potential of workforce; • The availability of quality and inclusive services in the field of lifelong counselling is insufficient, which reduces the participation of adults in further education; • Low availability of education and counseling for adults, lack of interest and motivational tools to increase participation and support the acquisition of LLL competencies; • Absence of a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning. <p>The Youth Guarantee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no comprehensive, tailor-made, and holistic approach to supporting young people at the time of transition from school and entry in the labour market, based on knowledge of the needs of the target group. <p>Active inclusion and accessible services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsatisfactory provision of the transition from institutional care to home and community care, insufficient range of community social services; they are not available or accessible to all target groups and there is a lack of effective cooperation between various service providers and lack of support mechanisms focused on community development, including in MRC;
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Výsledky celoslovenského testovania žiakov 9. ročníka základných škôl a 4. ročníka gymnázií s osemročným vzdelávacím programom, https://www.nucem.sk/dl/4467/Vysledky_T9_2019_final_prezentacia.pdf;

¹⁵ The share of uninvolved pupils was highest in schools with a high share of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (SDB):

- o In primary schools, which have the highest proportions of pupils from SDB, it was not possible to make at all almost a quarter of pupils (23.8%) to participate, compared to 3.1% in schools with no or minimal share of pupils from SDB
- o in secondary schools with the highest representation of students from SDB were 13.9% students uninvolved (2.9% in secondary schools with the lowest representation)
- o The above-average share of uninvolved pupils was in Košice (12.7%), Prešov (11.8%) and Banská Bystrica regions (9.2%); o Two thirds of the total estimated number of uninvolved pupils are educated in schools in these regions

Hlavné zistenia z dotazníkového prieskumu v základných a stredných školách o priebehu dištančnej výučby v školskom roku 2019/2020, IVP MŠVVaŠ SR, <https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/17338.pdf>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of concept of interconnected long-term (health and social) care, including assessment activities, as well as an optimal network of facilities providing long-term health care; • Insufficient access to integrated health care, low population participation in prevention programs; • Poor access to health care for the most disadvantaged groups; • Lack of staff in field of health and social services, the need to make these professions more attractive; • Absence of affordable housing; • Lack of effective protection of disadvantaged groups from discrimination and unequal treatment. <p>Active inclusion of Roma Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent unfavourable socio-economic situation in municipalities with the presence of MRC and absence of comprehensive support mechanism for these target groups; • Insufficient access to basic infrastructure, technical and civil equipment, to essential services, social services, employment services and healthcare in MRC compared to the rest of the population; • Absence of affordable housing; • Lack of effective protection of disadvantaged groups from discrimination and unequal treatment; • Lack of administrative capacity and financial support for Roma and pro-Roma NGOs at the regional level; • The need to maintain and develop the monitoring and evaluation system of inclusive policies to develop their better targeting. <p>Social innovations and experiments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent promotion and implementation of innovative approaches and putting them into practice. <p>Food and material deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient scope of social interventions in eliminating the worst forms of poverty, material deprivation and social exclusion.
PO 5	Programme Slovakia	ERDF	<p>Regional disparities, i.e., inequalities, differences, heterogeneities or differences in the degree of socio-economic development of individual regions of the SR are determined by their different conditions.</p> <p>In 2013 and 2019, the SR followed the trend of a gradual decrease in GDP per capita and thus an increase in regional disparities in the period under review. The overall picture of regional differentiation in Slovakia is characterised by northwest-southeast polarisation, while the worst indicators are shown by the southern part of central Slovakia and the north-eastern regions of Slovakia.</p> <p>Regional disparities are also documented by the development of labour market indicators, social indicators, but also access to basic environmental infrastructure.</p> <p>An increase in regional disparities can also be reflected in an increase in uncertainty and a deterioration of the business environment, leading to a reduction in the rate of investment or capital outflows and a consequent reduction in economic performance. The cumulative effect of the outflow of financial and human capital may lead to a deepening of the backwardness of problem regions, negative demographic trends and de facto depopulation of regions.</p> <p>The current regional policy, which addresses problems and not their causes is inefficient and ineffective. In order to eliminate negative trends,</p>

			<p>it is necessary to change the concept of support for regional development and use comprehensive integrated solutions.</p> <p>Supporting several areas within PO1 - 4 through the Integrated Territorial Approach can help reduce regional disparities. To improve the quality of life in Slovak regions, Slovakia proposes also promotion of several areas under this Objective (PO5), primarily on the following grounds:</p> <p>Building administrative and analytical and strategic capacities of local and regional stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of administrative capacities to apply integrated management and development at the level of municipalities, including strategic planning, data-based decision-making, open governance and creating cross-sectoral partnerships; • Insufficient training of staff at all levels of government; • Lack of process optimisation and better public policy making in local government. <p>Better public policies and open governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to strengthen an integrated approach to social, economic and environmental development at regional and local levels, through integrated territorial investments that integrate the possibilities of all Cohesion policy objectives; • Lack of public participation in public administration decision-making processes; • Insufficient participation of socio-economic partners, civil society representatives, including marginalised and vulnerable groups. <p>Safe physical environment of municipalities, cities, and regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deepening polarisation of the society, the rise of populism, extremism and radicalisation, distrust in the institutions of the democratic state, low levels of identification of citizens with the EU, and low efficiency of public institutions and public administration in this area; • The need to increase security is in line with the Crime Prevention Strategy and relevant security objectives, as well as related public services based on the strategic parts of the Economic and Social Development Programmes (ESDP) at regional and local level; • Insufficient quality of regional airport infrastructure and public airports with a critical state of air operations safety. <p>Infrastructure for physical activities and leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to strengthen community development, the development of interpersonal relations, the reduction of social exclusion through the new use of urban and rural objects for the benefit of communities and active leisure; • Lack of interest in physical and leisure activities in the regions; • Lack of quality regional infrastructure and cycling transport for physical and sport activities for citizens, <p>Cultural heritage, community development, and sustainable tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to improve the attractiveness of locations, their accessibility and the quality of information provided to visitors in order to use the potential of the area; • Lack of coordination and linking of existing activities in the territory • High proportion of cultural monuments in a threatened and dilapidated condition, as well as public spaces; • Lack of a comprehensive tourist infrastructure, including analytical and statistical sources of visitor and public movements.
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			<p>European capital of culture 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to deliver on the European Capital of Culture 2026 project in line with European standards <p>The specific territorial challenges of each from 8 NUTS 3 Slovak regions are described in the analytical part of the Integrated Territorial Strategy of individual self governing regions.</p>
Specific Objective JTF	Programme Slovakia	JTF	<p>It is key to address the consequences of the transition and to support the areas most affected by the transition to climate neutrality owing to their dependence on fossil fuels or industrial processes associated with high greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants affecting air quality. Three regions in Slovakia have the potential to be eligible for the support under the JTF, namely: the Trenčín Region, the Banská Bystrica Region and the Košice Region.</p> <p><u>The Upper Nitra Region (Trenčín Region)</u></p> <p>The focus in the Trenčín Region is narrowed down to the Upper Nitra sub-Region and the districts of Prievidza and Partizánske. The Upper Nitra region is the main coal-mining region in Slovakia where coal mining and coal combustion will end by 2023. The phase-out of the mining and coal-fired energy generation will lead to approximately 2170 direct job losses by 2030. It is necessary to ensure participatory principle and involve relevant local, regional and national stakeholders, business sector, representatives of relevant NGOs, and young people in the implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plan.</p> <p>Due to the transition, the Upper Nitra Region will face the following challenges:</p> <p>Economic diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting strong interdependency of the regional economy to the extraction and use of lignite; • Low activity of SMEs in the region; • Lower availability of opportunities in R&D&I; • Insufficient cooperation between businesses and research institutions and the need to improve the innovation ecosystem; • Lack of opportunities for people who will lose their jobs as a direct result of the transition; • Insufficient opportunities for younger generation that will no longer find jobs in the declining mining sector; • Poor digital connectivity. <p>Sustainable environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impacts caused by mining and industrial activities in the region; • Lack of initiative supporting the circular economy; • Low share of RES in the energy sector; • Increasing number of abandoned industrial sites after coal mining phase-out; • Risk of energy poverty connected with low energy efficiency of buildings; • Insufficient use of alternative modes of transportation; • Lack of integration of alternative modes of transport with other modes of transport. <p>Quality of life and social infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low attractiveness of the region for both residents and tourists; • Significant depopulation, which can be further magnified by the phase-out of coal industry;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest share of the post-productive age group in the Slovak Republic; • Low preparedness and low level of skills of employees for new emerging industries as a result of transition • Low participation in the dual education system; • Insufficient adjustment of education programmes to the needs of new economic sectors; • Significant mismatch on the job market between the qualifications of the job seekers and job vacancies; • Negative impacts on health of the population, both the employees in mining industry, and residents due to polluted environment; • Negative social effects, especially on the most vulnerable groups leading to social exclusion. <p><u>The Košice Region</u></p> <p>The Košice Region, was identified as one of the regions expected to be most affected by the transition to climate neutrality. The Košice Region has the highest potential to reduce CO₂ emissions by 2030 from all the analysed regions. Decarbonisation measures will have a negative impact on employment in the region.</p> <p>Due to the scale and the complexity of the transition, the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in the process of implementation will ensure that the Territorial Just Transition Plan and proposed actions reflect the transition needs and challenges specific for the impacted region.</p> <p>Due to the transition, the Košice Region will face the following challenges:</p> <p>Economic diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of attractive job opportunities for the young generation suitable to offset the lost job opportunities in steel production; • Low exploitation of the potential in R&D&I considering the good basis represented by the existing innovation ecosystem at universities and their technology and science parks; • Low level of diversification of economy and its preparedness after the expected extensive layoffs as a result of upcoming technological changes in production processes in metallurgical industry (U.S. Steel); • Low entrepreneurship activity of SMEs in the region; • Insufficient level of digitalisation. <p>Sustainable environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low exploitation of the potential in RES, especially in geothermal energy use and clean energy; • Significant impact of industry on the environment in the region due to high level of pollution; • Significant gaps in circular economy practices, especially in waste management and water management projects; • Low energy efficiency of buildings; • Increasing number of abandoned industrial sites. <p>Quality of life and social infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low preparedness and mismatch of skills of workers and job-seekers with the future needs of labour market; • Insufficient level of education related to the potential in new technologies and industries, emerging sectors in the region (including IT sector); <p>Inconsistency between the demand and supply in the labour market.</p>
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			<p><u>The Banská Bystrica Region</u></p> <p>The Banská Bystrica Region is the most rural region, its economy is heavily dependent on climate-intensive industry and the operation of large enterprises. The region was significantly affected by the changes caused by the economic transition in the 1990s, which almost completely wiped out the local industry as well as the recent and abrupt closure of mines in municipality Veľký Krtíš. The region is coping with consequences of transition to the present and is highly vulnerable and unprepared for any upcoming transition in coming years.</p> <p>For the successful implementation of the Territorial Just Transition Plan, it will be necessary to ensure a participatory approach of stakeholders in the implementation process.</p> <p>Due to the transition, the Banská Bystrica Region will face the following challenges:</p> <p>Economic diversification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High dependence on industry in the selected sub-regions; • None diversification of economy and low activity of SMEs; • Weak institutional framework and limited support, as well as the lack of information on R&D&I initiatives among businesses, together with lower collaboration with research institutions; • Insufficient opportunities for young people, who subsequently migrate away from the region to seek opportunities elsewhere; • Poor digital connectivity. <p>Sustainable environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant gap in energy efficiency in buildings in the region; • Significant impact of the industry on of the environment in the region due to high level of pollution – particularly air pollution; • Significant impact of emissions from transport due to the older stock of vehicles with lower emission standards in the region, as well as the poor interconnection of the sub-regions by public transport, limiting the alternatives to individual road transportation; • High dependency of local economies on climate-intensive industries; • Low capacities in the area of the waste management and landfilling practices in the region. <p>Quality of life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demographic situation turning into a human capital crisis; • Significant gaps in digital and circular economy skills; • Low participation in the dual education system; • Insufficient adjusting of education programmes to the needs of new economic sectors; • Inconsistency between education and training systems and labour market requirements; • The structural mismatch between labour supply and demand causing a high supply of low-skilled labour force.
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2. Policy choices, coordination and complementarity

Reference: points (b)(i), (ii) and (iii) of Article 11(1)

2.1 A summary of the policy choices and the main results expected for each of the funds covered by the Partnership Agreement – point (b)(i) of Article 11(1)

European Green Deal (EGD) has set an ambitious goal of transforming EU economy towards a sustainable future, and sets the framework to achieve climate-neutral and circular economy by 2050 at the latest. In this context, Slovakia commits to use Partnership Agreement funds in order to achieve maximum benefit possible: supply of clean, affordable and secure energy, acceleration of the transition to sustainable and smart mobility, mobilisation of the industry for clean and circular economy, efficient construction and renovations of buildings from the viewpoint of energy and sources, implementation of the zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment, protection and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity, ensuring resistance of regions and cities from effects of the climate change and others, in line with the specific initiatives under the European Green Deal. Investment priorities identified in Annex D of the Country Report Slovakia 2019 have been also taken into account. Moreover, Slovakia will use the Funds to mobilise research and foster innovation in the sustainability area. Finally, Slovakia commits to take into account the Do No Significant Harm principle in its investments under all Policy Objectives. Considering that the European Green Deal highlights that its targets can be achieved only whilst leaving no one behind and in a fair and inclusive way, Slovakia will support those most vulnerable and the most exposed to the social and economic impacts of the transition, for example by reskilling and upskilling. Slovakia will also make effort, in the sense of the draft of legislation package “Fit for 55”, to ensure meeting new targets (once they are adopted) and application of the energy efficiency priority principle. With respect to the absorption of EU funds, the principles of green public procurement will be applied to all scopes of public procurement, where possible, at least within those product groups where the central state administration bodies are obliged to apply them, following the relevant resolutions of the Government of the SR.

OBJECTIVE 1 – A SMARTER EUROPE

Fund: ERDF

The RIS3 strategy document forms the basis for all proposed R&I activities under the Policy Objective 1 *A more competitive and smarter Europe*. R&I measures in this document meet both the RIS3 Strategic Objectives and the RIS3 Domain Specific Objectives at the national level. Research activities under this policy objective will focus on applied research (within which will be supported e.g. industrial research, clinical and translational research, experimental development, aid for feasibility studies, aid for the establishment and modernization of research infrastructures, etc.). Basic research, including infrastructure will not be supported.

1.1 Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

1.1.1 Promoting cross sectoral cooperation in research, development and innovation and increasing research and innovation capacities in enterprises

The support will be mainly targeted at strengthening cooperation between the public academic and business sectors and boosting research and innovation potential in companies. All activities will be carried out in the areas defined in the RIS3 smart specialisation strategy and at the same time ensure a contribution to the EGD.

Expected results:

- strengthened links and long-term partnerships built, between clusters, businesses, and public academic sector;
- strengthened cooperation between businesses and research institutions to enable transition to smart and circular economy;
- increased private sector investments into research and innovations;
- increased quantity and quality of inputs and outputs of R&I in the SR;
- increased innovation capacities and productivity of enterprises.

1.1.2 Support for building human resources in research, development and innovation

The main objective of the measure is to ensure highly qualified human resources for the modern, resilient and efficient economy of Slovakia.

Expected results:

- stabilisation and growth of quality human resources in academia, public and business research sector;
- reduced outflow of human research capital abroad, supporting the return of Slovak researchers working abroad;

- establishment of foreign researchers in Slovak research;
- increased number of researchers and R&D professionals in companies;
- improved ability to transform research and innovation results into practice.

1.1.3 Stimulation of international cooperation in the area of research, development and innovation

The main goal of this measure is to strengthen the participation of Slovak entities in European research and innovation programmes, partnerships and initiatives within the EU.

Expected results:

- increased participation, success rate and support for Slovak entities, researchers and research teams, and higher quality of their project proposals in the initiatives of the European Research and Innovation Area.

1.1.4 Support for the optimization, development and modernisation of research infrastructure

The main objective of the support will be the upgrade, completion, optimization and development of the research infrastructure, taking into account the ROADMAP of the research infrastructure (in order to avoid duplicate support of research infrastructure, which was built in previous periods within the territory of the Slovak Republic, and to use the full potential of the existing infrastructure more efficiently), the needs of RIS3 domains and responding to specific individual needs based on EDP in the SR to the European level, and to ensure the networking of Slovak research infrastructures abroad, especially within ESFRI.

Especially in the field of health care, the intention is to develop, upgrade and support infrastructure and capacities in clinical and translational research, which have not been sufficiently supported in the past. Adequate infrastructure is necessary to meet the transformation goals in the priority areas of the RIS3 domain Healthy Society. The research will focus mainly on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, as well as aftercare, especially socially serious diseases with subsequent improvement of health and quality of life.

Expected results:

- optimized and modernized university science parks and research centres;
- making available public R&D infrastructure made available without restrictions for solving research tasks of the corporate sectors;
- supporting the development specialised research infrastructures to stimulate research and innovation, as well as creating conditions for the integration of clinical research and advanced medicine in the key areas in socially serious diseases (e.g. creating TRCs – Translational Research Centres);
- supporting investment in common strategic infrastructure in an optimised network, which is fundamentally defined by the needs of the RIS3 EDP deliverables and which contributes to the achievement of EU priorities, objectives and initiatives, in particular in the field of key enabling technologies.

1.2 Reaping the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

1.2.1 Promoting informatization and digital transformation

Main objective of the support is to increase the innovation capacity of the economy through the introduction of the innovative and secure digital technologies, increase the quality of public services provided and to ensure the cyber security in line with 2030 Digital Transformation Strategy for Slovakia.

The aim of the support will be to increase the innovative capacity of the economy, through the introduction of innovative and secure digital technologies.

Expected results:

- increased competitiveness of enterprises by supporting the digitalisation of industrial production, services and innovative processes of better regulation;
- the functioning of new business models, including the shared and circular economy, decentralised digital economy and the use of digital and eco-innovations in industry and services;
- creation of functional national network of European digital innovation centres;
- centres of digital innovation (CDI) - one stop shop – hubs to support digital transformation and networking of European Digital Innovation Centres (EDIC);
- increased level of digitization in healthcare focusing on a systematic work with data, application tools including “AI”, and digital innovation for prevention, screening, diagnostics and therapy;
- introduction of tools and solutions from telemedicine in healthcare in order to improve accessibility and quality of healthcare provision;
- building capacities in the field of research, development and application of high-performance computing and

quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, decentralized recording and other innovative technologies.

The support will be aimed to increase the quality of public services, and build an effective cyberspace protection system of the SR.

Expected results:

- building platform services within centralised information systems of public administration, introduction of “Government as a Platform” using API;
- prediction and better planning of public policies based on analytical data / big data, digitalisation of key processes, data transformation and cloud provisioning in order to personalize public services, reduce costs and improve the level of Slovak eGovernment interoperability within EU; promoting and strengthening of cyber security at the national level and within the public administration (accessibility, security, resilience), including information security in the online space.

1.2.2 Promoting the development of smart cities and regions

The main subject of support will be to ensure the development of cities and regions through the implementation of innovative technological solutions.

Expected results:

- involvement of citizens in public life and promoting tools for active participation of citizens in governance;
- introduction of smart specialisation innovation in local and regional administration;
- streamlined use of resources in the region and the city, including monitoring of related infrastructure and smart waste management;
- creation of opportunities for wide and affordable use of smart mobility services for passenger and freight transport (smart transport systems, intelligent data);
- development and building infrastructure for alternative forms, creating conditions for the use of interconnected automated and autonomous transport means.

1.3 Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs including by productive investments

1.3.1 Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises

The main objective of the measure will be to stimulate the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in various sectors of the economy, with a priority focus on the areas identified by RIS3 and innovative enterprises.

Expected results:

- improved access of SMEs to finance, including through tailor-made instruments;
- increased innovative potential of SMEs;
- stimulated innovation potential for the transition to circular and low-carbon economy to support growth of competitiveness of SMEs;
- improved decision-making processes in public administration bodies in the support and development of SMEs;
- an increase in innovative solutions, innovative design and ecodesign, SMEs transition to circular economy, efficient use of resources and secondary raw materials, saving materials and energy sources;
- maintained and strengthened position of businesses in the aftermath of the economic crises caused by the pandemic of COVID-19;
- improved access of SMEs and potential entrepreneurs to various forms of consultations and business support.

1.3.2 Internationalisation of small and medium sized businesses

The aim is to support growth in productivity and maintain the competitiveness of Slovak SMEs in the international context.

Expected results:

- better access of SMEs to international markets and consulting, and increased participation of Slovak SMEs in national and international presentation events (fairs, expositions, conferences), trade and business missions, events and conferences.

1.3.3 Support for networking of business entities

The main objective of the measure is to enhance an innovative ecosystem, by supporting the creation and development of a cluster ecosystem and platforms supporting the increase of competitiveness of enterprises.

Expected results:

- improvement of cluster ecosystem in Slovakia and increased participation of SMEs in cluster organisations and platforms promoting innovation, including digital and eco-innovation;
- business networking and participation in value chains;
- participation of clusters and innovation platforms in international networks;
- development of shared infrastructure including cross-border in order to promote cooperation and innovation.

1.4 Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship

1.4.1 Skills for strengthening competitiveness and economic growth and build capacities for RIS3

The main purpose is to provide and develop skills and competences (technical, highly specialised, generic, digital and other) for RIS3 domains in accordance with need of industrial and green transformation in close cooperation with educational institutions and companies, also by means of modernising of the education infrastructure.

Expected results:

- better matching of skills and competences with sectoral needs in line with the needs of the priority areas of RIS3 domains;
- providing skills for workers in relevant key industries (reducing skills shortages);
- building a workforce equipped with a broad range of skills;
- strengthened links and broad mutual cooperation between companies-employers, education providers and other skills providers;
- developing a broader and more flexible education and training offer as response to the changes in the skills demand;
- improved competences and building of a stable innovative ecosystem for uncovering companies in order to increase the build-up of capacities based on high adaptability and flexibility in transformation processes;
- modernized and optimized school infrastructure capable of providing the skills and competences of graduates in line with sectoral needs;
- creation of a functional coordinated R&D&I management system and creation of innovation consortia and ecosystem in Slovak regions in selected economic sectors based on the principle of entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) taking into account regional specificities and RIS3 priorities based on quality of projects, which are defined in a bottom-up approach with the involvement of a spectrum of participants in the quadruple helix model.

1.4.2 Digital skills adjusted to RIS3 domains and the needs of industrial and green transformation

The support will be focused on building digital skills related to different RIS3 domains and the needs arising from and green industrial transformation.

Expected results:

- improved digital skills that comply with the needs of RIS3 domains;
- increased capacity and innovation capability of the economy through the introduction of top digital technologies and ICT solutions (especially in SMEs), support of Digital Innovation Hubs; Increasing participation in European projects of common interest (multi-country projects) in education arising from industrial transformation as well as the field of green transition;
- enhanced quality and effectiveness of public services in terms of capacity development in public administration, the private sector and improving the ability of the citizens to use these services efficiently and safely; further take-up of Europe wide interoperable services;
- fostering training and increased number of lecturers focused on the development of advanced digital skills and the training of IT specialists; Support of the EC's Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition initiative, increase of the activities related to programming, e-inclusion, use of advanced ICT solutions, further development of e-learning services, cybersecurity and online safety for young people; increase the share of women in ICT fields.

1.5 Enhancing digital connectivity

1.5.1 Support for broadband connection

The goal is to ensure broadband connection with a very high capacity.

Expected results:

- increase in % of addresses/households with broadband connection (min. 100 Mbps, which can be upgraded

to 1 Gbps) in line with National Broadband Plan;

- priority access of significant socio-economic partners (healthcare, educational institutions, research and innovation institutions, urban areas, transport hubs, and digital sector companies) to broadband (min. 1 Gbps and faster);
- increased coverage of the main transport corridors by new generation mobile networks, including 5G technology (in line with document titled "Support to development of 5G networks in Slovakia for years 2020 – 2025"); .

For information on activities of PO1 implemented through ITI see the Programme Slovakia.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 2 – A GREENER, LOW-CARBON EUROPE

Fund: ERDF/CF/EMFAF

Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

It will be necessary to support the implementation of measures to achieve national energy targets expressed in the NECP, as well as the more ambitious goals of the Fit for 55 Package. This includes the improvement of energy efficiency in businesses and measures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, as buildings, together with industry, have the highest potential to save energy. Support for measures to increase the efficiency of energy supply systems (heat and cold supply) and the use of alternative propulsion in businesses, including the construction of appropriate non-public infrastructure, will also contribute to improving energy efficiency. Reducing final energy consumption in public and residential buildings will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions¹⁶. Improving thermo technical characteristics of a building leads to a healthier climate in the interior, higher level of wellbeing and comfort and improved health of its users¹⁷. The use of RES and low-emission equipment in buildings will improve air quality, which will have a positive impact on the health and quality of life of the population. Promoting development of sustainable regional and local energy sector, including the energy planning and optimisation of energy consumption as well as promoting and application of the energy efficiency first principle, is a key measure in this area and a prerequisite for effective achievement of energy targets.

Expected results:

- contributing to meeting the EU's energy efficiency targets for 2030 and the strategic goals of the EU's transition to carbon neutrality by 2050, as well as new EU climate objectives under the Fit for 55 Package, once adopted by the Member States;
- support for the implementation of energy efficiency measures in order to contribute to the reduction of final energy consumption by approximately 237 000 MWh and the fulfilment of obligations specified in the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan of the SR and Low-Carbon Development Strategy of the SR until 2030;
- systematic support for energy planning, coordination and development of sustainable regional and local energy (through the creation of a network of energy centres and the strengthening of energy management of local governments) and the support of measures to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the use of RES in order to optimize energy demand and consumption, including raising awareness in the field of energy efficiency;
- increasing energy efficiency in businesses and operations by supporting the implementation of energy efficiency measures, including SMART technologies, measurement and control technology;
- expansion of a highly energy-efficient and decarbonised building stock and activation of the digitalization of buildings;
- intensifying the rate of cost-effective deep renovation¹⁸ of residential buildings¹⁹ and increasing the pace of deep renovation of public buildings²⁰ with the application of elements for nature protection, biodiversity and green infrastructure and with the application of energy efficiency first principle and circular economy principles;
- increasing number of buildings equipped with management and automation systems²¹ and the number of

¹⁶ When setting the indicative milestones in the buildings sector in LTRS, both new ambitious climate targets for 2030 and the key priority of the initiative *Renovation Wave* of stepping up the rate of renovation have been taken into account. See p. 3-4.

¹⁷ LTRS, p. 28-33, p. 57

¹⁸ § 2(8) Act Nr. 555/2005 Coll.

¹⁹ LTRS, p. 32, picture 8

²⁰ LTRS, p. 37, 39

²¹ LTRS, p. 40; § 8(6) Act Nr. 555/2005 Coll.

- buildings equipped with elements for charging electric vehicles (line infrastructure, charging stations) ²²;
- reducing energy intensity of heat and cold distribution, more efficient use of the capacity of existing central heat supply systems and improving the energy efficiency of the energy supply infrastructure;
- contribution to GHG emissions reduction by approximately 106 000 t;
- increasing the use of alternative sources and drives in companies and operations.

Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainable criteria set out therein

A suitable combination of RES and low-carbon technologies will reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, i.e. greenhouse gas emissions. Slovakia has potential in the field of wind and solar energy. The potential of geothermal energy has been underused so far. Supporting hydrogeological survey aimed at efficient geothermal energy use (including geothermal wells) will help to create conditions for the real use of this RES, especially for heat supply. In the case of support for energy production from biomass, compliance with the sustainability criteria and environmentally sound approaches will be ensured for supported installations. Apart from improved efficiency of energy production and distribution, it will also be important to increase the RES share in energy supply systems (heat and cold) as well as to increase the RES use in households based on self-sustainability or active consumption and energy communities. The support for RES will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of sustainability and environmental protection.

Expected results:

- contribution to the fulfilment of the EU objectives in the field of RES use;
- overall contribution to the increased share of RES in Slovakia by approximately 180 MW; including
- increased use of RES in businesses and households;
- increasing the share of RES in the heat and cold supply systems, as well as increasing the share of RES in energy carriers, including biomethane and green hydrogen, mainly to provide heating and cooling;
- increasing the share of RES in individual heating and cooling systems;
- increased use of RES in the environment of energy communities and active consumers;
- creating conditions for the use of geothermal energy for energy purposes;
- accelerating the transition to a cost-effective, sustainable and secure energy supply system, reducing GHG emissions by 125 000 t and improving air quality.

Developing smart energy systems, grids and storage outside the Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-e)

Support for smart energy systems and storage, including smart grids and management systems, will help increase the efficiency of energy-consuming facilities, including the possibility of connecting new RES-based facilities and simplify, streamline and optimize the process of facilities connection to the network. The measure reflects the investment priority identified in Annex D of the Country report Slovakia 2019 to deploy solutions for smart electricity distribution grids and storage – linked to demand and supply planning on local level. The measure aims at local solutions (outside TEN-E) and energy communities.

Expected results:

- efficient use of resources and storage facilities connected to the system;
- creating opportunities for active involvement of end users in the process of optimization and reduction of their energy requirements and costs;
- improving energy efficiency and reducing energy losses;
- deploying solutions for smart electricity distribution grids and storage.

Promoting adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and disaster resilience

The aim is to improve preparedness to face the adverse effects of climate change in line with the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the SR approved by the Government of the SR in 2018. The subject of support are adaptation measures, especially water retention measures, preventive measures for flood protection, adaptation of flood safety of water constructions to changed climatic conditions, hydrogeological exploration, landslide remediation (in line with Landslide Risk Prevention and Management Program 2021 – 2029 approved by the Government of the SR), updating of flood risk management plans, creation of adaptation strategies, especially at lower levels, completion of data and information in the field of climate change. The basic precondition for risk preparedness is also the identification of their origin, source, course and possible consequences. The support is aimed at the elaboration of analytical and conceptual documents for the identification of risk development, strategic materials for the determination of methods of prevention and response to possible disasters. Another area of support is building specialized rescue modules, the development, renewal and strengthening of technical and logistical capacities, including management, rescue services, services performing antiflood security works and self-government, civil protection and crisis management. Measures

²² LTRS, p. 33

are also needed to build and modernize risk assessment, early warning and notification systems at national, regional and local levels in accordance with the National Security Risk Management Strategy of the Slovak Republic in line with the fulfilment of the enabling condition 2.4.

Expected results:

- increasing the number of people having benefits from adaptation measures, including flood protection measures;
- protection of almost 5,000 inhabitants living in areas with a significant flood risk;
- supporting green and blue infrastructure with a positive impact on water retention in country, as well as on creating shading elements in settlements;
- identification of new water resources;
- remediation of landslides affected by climate change;
- elaboration of adaptation strategies;
- improving data processing for risks monitoring related to climate change and for the provision of information;
- improving data and information processing, modelling developments and monitoring risks related to climate change;
- development, renewal and strengthening of technical and logistical capacities, including management, rescue services and self-government, as well as material support for volunteers;
- increasing the efficiency of emergency management by strengthening the intervention capacity of rescue services through building specialized rescue modules, preferably a module of aerial forest fire fighting and supporting other measures necessary for timely and effective intervention;
- increasing the effectiveness of risk management resulting from violation of environmental legislation;
- conceptual support for the prevention and effective fight against environmental crime;
- increasing key capacities for climate change prevention, preparedness and response and updating early warning and notification systems;
- support for adaptation measures and their implementation, including professional capacities building.

Improving water quality and water supply status and wastewater treatment

The aim is to ensure good status of surface water and groundwater, including the completion of the sewerage network and WWTP, as well as to improve the availability of safe drinking water. Supported activities will focus on the completion of public sewerage and WWTPs in agglomerations above 2,000 PE, and on the disposal and treatment of municipal wastewater in agglomerations/municipalities below 2,000 PE in areas of priority from the environmental point of view²³, as well on the infrastructure for the treatment and disposal of municipal wastewater in municipalities below 2,000 inhabitants in areas of priority from the regional point of view²⁴, including the construction of decentralised municipal wastewater management systems (e.g. root wastewater treatment plants, small wastewater treatment plants), as well as to improve the infrastructure for the supply of safe drinking water to the population, including the completion of water treatment plants and construction of public water supply systems together with the infrastructure for the municipal wastewater treatment in agglomerations and areas as mentioned above, as well as quality water monitoring, data processing support for effective water policy of the SR and, in the case of available resources, the renewal of water infrastructure. The financial contribution for the implementation of individual systems or other appropriate systems of municipal wastewater treatment and disposal (IAS) will be provided through a subsidy scheme for households. Increased attention will be paid to the monitoring and control of IAS according to respective legislation (see Annex 1 to the PA). Supported investments of water management in municipalities with the presence of MRCs are specified in Programme Slovakia.

Expected results:

- increased number of agglomerations above 2,000 PE with connection to the public sewerage system and fulfilment of the obligations resulting from the EU directives;
- improved sewerage system and waste water treatment in agglomerations below 2,000 PE;
- increase in the number of citizens supplied with safe drinking water from public water supply system;
- increasing reliability of groundwater and surface water monitoring;
- creating a comprehensive water information system.

Transition to circular economy with emphasis on waste management

An important part of the transition to circular economy is the area of waste management, including the waste prevention as the highest level of the waste hierarchy, as well as the waste minimisation, e. g. through supporting of packaging

²³ Water Management protected areas, protected areas of water resources and natural protection areas

²⁴ Catching-up regions

technologies that reduce production of packaging (and subsequently of packaging waste). The main objective is to contribute to the efficient use of material resources, to increase the level of re-use, preparation for re-use and recycling of waste and to move away from the disposal of waste in landfills. In accordance with the objectives of the Waste Prevention Programme of the SR and measures of the Waste Management Programme of the SR, supported waste management activities will include waste prevention, collection and sorting of municipal waste, preparation for re-use, waste recycling, including anaerobic and aerobic treatment of biodegradable waste. Strategic planning in the field of waste management will be supported by enhanced electronic data collection. It is necessary to provide information about the circular economy and to support conceptual activities in the given area. The transition to a circular economy is supported complementary within PO 1 and PO 2. (See Annex 2 to the PA). Supported investments of water management in municipalities with the presence of MRCs are specified in Programme Slovakia.

Expected results:

- increasing the capacity for recycling of waste;
- increasing the amount of sorted waste,
- increasing the amount of recycled waste by 2.5 %,
- reducing the rate of landfilling of municipal waste by 10 %,
- raising awareness of consumers and stakeholders about waste prevention, reuse and reparability of products, and sustainable production and consumption, including promotion of voluntary environmental policy instruments.

Improving the protection of nature, landscape, biodiversity and ecosystem services

In this area, the protection of habitats and species is important, especially in the Natura 2000 network in line with the Priority Action Framework (PAF) for the Natura 2000 network in the SR for the programming periods 2014 - 2020 and 2021- 2027, the support of biodiversity, the protection and restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services. Appropriate activities will include the implementation of approved management documents, (including Capercaillie), management of protected habitats and species (including CITES), including the completion and expansion of rescue centres for endangered species and reconstruction of facilities designed to perform the functions of the state in the field of nature protection, as well as monitoring and mapping of habitats and species, removal of invasive species, building green and blue infrastructure, ensuring continuity and connectivity of waterways. Systematic support for the revitalisation of neglected and unused locations in urban areas of public entities will also be implemented, while maintaining the rule that the restored premises and areas will be used for non-economic activities and high environmental criteria will be applied in their revitalisation. The renewal and construction of environmental centres will also be supported, including in protected areas, in order to increase environmental awareness and education in a broader context, serving both professionals and the wide public. Environmental centers will be used to increase public environmental awareness also in the areas of adaptation to climate change, water management, transition to circular economy with emphasis on waste management and air quality.

Expected results:

- improving the protection and status of habitats and species in Natura 2000 network on the expected area of 115 thousand hectares;
- promoting nature and biodiversity protection, including new elements of green or blue infrastructure on the expected area of 13 hectares, as well as via eradication of invasive species;
- improving the status of aquatic habitats and species through revitalisation and restoration of connectivity of water flows, restoration of floodplains, as well as removal barriers in water courses;
- reducing the area of neglected and unused areas in urban settlements and eliminating their adverse impact on the environment;
- improving environmental awareness through environmental enlightenment and information and support of environmental centers.

Ensuring the exploration, remediation and monitoring of environmental burdens

The remediation of environmental burdens in accordance with the "polluter pays" principle and Act No. 409/2011 Coll. can make a significant contribution to reducing pollution, not only in the urban environment. The support will be aimed at the provision of exploration, remediation and monitoring of environmental burdens.

Expected results:

- increasing the number of remediated environmental burdens and remediated areas;
- elimination of related risks to the environment and human health;
- introduction of progressive ways of tackling environmental burdens through the creation of an innovation and technological cluster and a chemical-technological centre

- increasing the number of explored and monitored environmental burdens.

Improving air quality

The aim is to reduce air pollution and improve its quality. Key activities include reducing dust emissions from household heating by replacing solid fossil fuel boilers with natural gas boilers, whereas priority will be given to areas and agglomerations with a high concentration of PM particles in the air, which is one of the necessary measures to resolve the infringement against the Slovak Republic for non-compliance with the limit values for dust particles according to the requirements of Directive 2008/50/EC. The implementation of measures on large and medium stationary sources of air pollution will also be supported while respecting the "polluter pays" principle, and improving air quality monitoring and management system, as well as accompanying information activities aimed at improving air quality, e.g. for information in the field of good heating practice.

Expected results:

- reducing air pollution especially by solid pollutants (PM), as well as other selected pollutants (SO₂, NO_x, NH₃, VOC);
- improving air quality monitoring system at national, local/regional levels and air quality management, including the creation of a new emission information system;
- enhancing monitoring of the impact of air pollution on ecosystems.

Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility

In particular, projects with a decisive and systemic impact on the functioning and preference of public passenger transport will be implemented. Priority will be given to the interventions in modernisation and creation of integrated transport systems, construction of transfer terminals in large urban agglomerations and the busiest transport hubs, construction of parking lots mainly at city outskirts and to enable passengers to switch to public passenger transport, construction and modernisation of tram and trolleybus lines, purchase of urban rolling fleet (trams, trolleybuses), or environmentally friendly²⁵ urban and suburban bus transport, upgrading of the infrastructure of existing maintenance bases (depots of transport companies). Support will also include the interconnection and streamlining transport modes (including non-motorised and public transport) in urban and suburban areas, the introduction of low-emission zones and urban parking policies, the promotion of cycling, and measures to increase passenger safety.

Expected results:

- increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of public passenger transport in order to increase the share of public passenger transport in the division of transport work and reduce the share of individual car transport;
- reduction of negative effects on the environment in large agglomerations (reduction of noise pollution, vibration, dust particles, pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions);
- enhancing the quality of services provided by the urban track passenger transport;
- improving transport infrastructure and creating preconditions for comprehensive changes in the organisation of public transport in settlements;
- ensuring safe and high-quality cycling paths infrastructure and its integration with other modes of public passenger transport;
- increasing the share of bicycle and others non-motorised traffic in the overall division of transport work.

Analytical and quantitative information on proposed measures related to PO₂ are elaborated in more detail in Annex 3.

EMFAF

Support from EMFAF in the SR is mainly aimed at the aquaculture sector (fish farming) and fishery and aquaculture products processing industry, as well as at the promotion of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (control and enforcement, data collection), gene pool support for selected fish species and marketing measures. EMFAF should also contribute to the support of the so-called "environmental pond services (non-production functions)".

Priority areas of the support from EMFAF, taking into account the [Farm to Fork strategy](#), [the Biodiversity Strategy](#) and the new [EU guidelines on sustainable aquaculture](#) (COM (2021) 236):

- promoting sustainable fisheries, modernization of existing aquaculture and processing facilities and the protection of aquatic biological resources;

²⁵ Vehicles pursuant to § 3(1) of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 214/2021 Coll. on the promotion of clean road transport vehicles, which transposed Directive 2009/33/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles.

- promoting sustainable aquaculture activities as well as processing of fishery and aquaculture products and their introduction in the market also through the promotion of sustainable aquaculture practices and construction of recirculation facilities;
- increased innovation and technology transfers to the sector;
- support to organic farming, creation of Producers Organisations;
- increased adaptation to climate change, strengthening the growth and resilience of the Slovak aquaculture sector.

Expected results:

- increased consumption of fish in the territory of the SR;
- increased number of aquaculture establishments;
- increasing share of processing of fishery and aquaculture products;
- support for specific “national” species of fish (support for gene pool of native fish population);
- renewed and new landscaping elements with a favourable environmental impact (ponds and water areas used in aquaculture);
- introduction of new species and increase production of aquaculture products through support for innovation and pilot projects.

For information on activities of PO2 implemented through ITI see Programme Slovakia.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 3 – A MORE CONNECTED EUROPE

Fund: ERDF/CF

Road Transport

The developed **network of motorways and expressways** is one of the basic preconditions for deeper economic integration, ensuring the free movement of goods and labour, and the economic development of the country. At the same time, the SR is fully aware of its commitment to TEN-T homogenisation, resulting from Regulation 1315/2013; that is to complete the core TEN-T network by the end of 2030. The priority is to complete the construction of the D3 motorway (north-south connection to Poland and the Czech Republic) and Turany - Hubová section of the D1 motorway (depends on financial sources and implementation date), to the completion of motorway connection between Bratislava and Košice. Where the construction of motorways is not planned, interventions will focus on the construction of expressways. Priority is given to the construction of new sections which divert traffic away from settlements, focusing on sections with the highest ratio of social benefits to cost. The financial resources of the relevant specific objective will be primarily used towards the development of the core TEN-T network.

In the case of **first-class roads** development, particular attention will be paid to the construction of bypasses and relocations of first-class roads, especially in sections with unsatisfactory technical and capacity parameters where the construction of TEN-T network is not considered. Interventions will also aim at improving unsatisfactory parameters (e.g. transverse and longitudinal inequalities, insufficient load-bearing capacity, weak safety precautions) of first-class roads, reconstruction of junctions and upgrading of bridges, with the aim of removing critical black spots on the road network.

Specific projects will be determined based on the results of feasibility studies and will reflect a list of priorities set in cooperation with the value for money department.

The improvement of **regional transport services** will be supported by investments in the construction of bypasses of towns and municipalities with the highest traffic intensity and reconstruction, modernisation and construction of secondary roads (roads in the Class II and III), or local roads, in accordance with the Plans of Sustainable Mobility in the Regions, and in line with the objectives identified in the territorial strategies (integrated territorial investments), including investments in areas with the presence of MRC, taking into account the higher priority of transnational and national solutions. The support will be directed primarily to the roads that improve accessibility to the TEN-T network, to the roads leading to the integrated transport terminals or railway stations, districts where there are no main roads, and for the renovation of bridges in poor or critical condition. Possible investments in local roads will be directed at the reconstruction of such local roads and their facilities in the most critical areas from the point of view of safety and threats to public transport.

An additional part of projects for the main or secondary roads is aimed at the promotion of cycling (as an associated investment) and measures to increase the safety of road users.

Expected results:

- eliminating key bottlenecks on the TEN-T network and increasing the capacity and quality of transport connections with neighbouring states, by building priority sections of the core, as well as the comprehensive TEN-T road network;
- creating conditions for the development of job opportunities and reduction of significant regional disparities within the SR (development of the so-called lagging regions, support for the transformation of the Upper Nitra region);
- accelerating traffic flow, elimination of frequent traffic congestions and time losses;
- increasing road safety and traffic flow, reducing accident rate;
- reduction of negative effects on the environment and improvement of living conditions in urban areas of cities and municipalities (noise pollution, emissions, vibrations and dust particles reduction);
- enhancing transport connections of the relevant regions to the TEN-T network and diverting a significant part of the transit road transport from urban areas and municipalities;
- increase first-class roads capacity in the most exposed sections;
- improve regional transport services;
- increase transport connections capacity, quality and safety of mobility and transport services in urban areas, cities and municipalities;
- increasing the share of bicycle transport and ensuring safe and high-quality bicycle roads infrastructure, including its integration with other modes of public passenger transport.

Rail Transport

Priority will be given to the **modernisation of the main railway lines included in the TEN-T network** with a high demand for rail passenger and freight transport (modernisation of sections on the core network of the Rhine-Danube corridor in the route Žilina - Košice – state border of the SR with Ukraine (SK/UA), Baltic-Adriatic corridor in route Žilina – state border of the SR with Poland (SK/PL) and the corridor Orient/Eastern Mediterranean in the route state border SK/CZ - Kúty – Bratislava , and the TEN-T comprehensive network in the route Bratislava - Štúrovo – state border SK/HU (Hungary) and modernisation of the most important railway hubs in Bratislava, Košice and Žilina, including possible electrification). In order to increase the interoperability of lines key for international traffic, the implementation of the European Railway Traffic Management System (ETCS track signalling system and GSM-R communication system) will be implemented. Interventions will focus on the modernisation of other safety, control and signalling equipment. The intention is also to build centres for the control and preparation of the railway passenger transport fleet for operation within the services of public interest and the construction and modernisation of intermodal transport terminals, in order to shift long-distance freight transport from roads to rail.

Emphasis will also be placed on raising the quality level of station buildings in order to make rail transport more attractive to the travelling public.

Within the framework of **regional railway transport**, projects will focus on planned regional lines with sufficient demand for passenger or freight rail transport. It is also planned to support the transformation of the coal region of Upper Nitra - the intention is to develop railway transport with regard to the frequency and speed of connections, mainly in the direction to Nitra and Bratislava. The aim is to ensure the required technical and operational parameters of these lines and the rapid rail connection of the regions to the TEN-T rail network. Interventions will focus on the modernisation and capacity building of railway lines and signalling equipment, installation of the ETCS and GSM-R telecommunication system, electrification of railway lines, remote traffic control, increase of line speed, etc. Using synergies, infrastructure projects will be complemented by investments in the renewal of rolling stock for railway public passenger transport, in the control system infrastructure and rolling stock preparation, in reducing safety risks (e.g. upgrading crossings with road infrastructure), and in building support infrastructure, in improving the services provided to residents, and in the construction and modernisation of intermodal transport terminals.

Specific projects in the field of rail transport will be identified based on the results of feasibility studies and will reflect the list of priorities set in cooperation with the “value for money” department.

Expected results:

- improving the quality of railway infrastructure for international and national passenger and freight services, removing key bottlenecks on the TEN-T rail network, reducing time and operating costs and developing long-distance and regional passenger services;
- increasing the share of electric traction in the total performance of railway transport and reducing negative effects on the environment and the human health;
- increasing the reliability and attractiveness of environmentally friendly and sustainable public passenger

transport as compared with individual car transport, including enhanced accessibility for persons with reduced mobility;

- alleviating congested road infrastructure and making better use of railway capacity;
- shifting of good flows from road freight transport to more environmentally friendly forms of transport such as rail or water transport;
- stabilisation of the public passenger rail transport sector, improving conditions for liberalisation, including enhancing the attractiveness, competitiveness and preference of rail transport as opposed to the individual passenger transport;
- shortening frequency intervals on lines with strong passenger flows and enabling more efficient circulation of train sets thanks to shortened travel times and increased railway lines throughput and capacities;
- ensuring the sustainability of the quality of vehicles and related services provided to passengers;
- reducing numbers of deaths at level crossings, and increasing the overall safety of rail transport.

Water transport

Projects will be implemented to ensure year-round navigability of waterways included in the core TEN-T network of inland waterways (the Danube and Váh rivers). The priority is to remote existing bottlenecks - low water levels, insufficient navigable heights under bridges, and limited fairway widths. Emphasis will be placed on the modernisation of the infrastructure and superstructure of TEN-T public ports (Bratislava, Komárno) and on additional equipment with suitable facilities. Attention will also be paid to assisting inland waterway vessel operators with the introduction of greening technologies, in order to maintain the environmentally friendly transport status for the inland waterway transport. Due to limited financial resources for the development of water transport, SK plans to focus primarily on ensuring pre-investment and project preparation of projects aimed at improving the navigability of the Danube waterway and modernizing the ports in Bratislava and Komárno. The implementation of other proposed activities will be possible after the allocation of additional resources within the re-programming process.

Expected results:

- improving the sector's readiness for investment actions (through preparation of studies and project documentation);
- enhanced quality of water transport for the services of international and domestic freight and passenger shipping services, creating year-round guaranteed navigation depths and increasing the safety of water transport;
- elimination of key bottlenecks on the TEN-T core network for water transport;
- reduction of time losses and operating costs by increasing transport speed;
- alleviating congested road infrastructure and reducing negative effects on the environment;
- expanding the portfolio of port, logistics and other services;
- increasing the competitiveness of public ports compared to other ports on the Danube;
- greening of inland waterway vessels already in operation in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/1628 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 14 September 2016, on emission limits for gaseous and particulate pollutants and type-approval of internal combustion engines for non-road mobile machinery.

For information on activities of PO3 implemented through ITI see Programme Slovakia.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 4 - A MORE SOCIAL AND INCLUSIVE EUROPE IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

Fund: ESF+/ERDF

The measures in this area will be primarily focused on supporting disadvantaged persons, such as long-term unemployed, young people under 29 and people aged 50 years and over, persons with low qualifications, people with disabilities, persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion, members of marginalised Roma communities (MRCs), and migrants in line with the objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

Adaptable and accessible labour market

In view of the changes in the labour market and the crisis caused by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, targeted support will be needed for disadvantaged people in their integration into the labour market through an individual approach, expert advice, cooperation between public and non-public employment service providers, regional and local authorities, and the activities of social and family businesses. Investment will be needed in developing the skills of people in the labour market related to the digital and green transformation and in improving the quality of employment services, and their electrification. Regions with high unemployment will need support for job creation and support for self-employment. Jobs will also need to be created in the green economy. The challenge ahead is providing support to

affordable and quality care, as well as to innovative and flexible forms of childcare, flexible forms of work and social services for parents of young children and people caring for the members of society dependent on assistance with self-service. The equal status of women and men in employment, including remuneration, should be promoted through a better awareness-raising activities, and the activation of senior citizens in community life and in support activities related to the labour market development is equally important.

Expected results ESF+ (SO a, b, c, d,):

- increasing the employment of the population aged 20 to 64 by 2030 to 76,5%;
- reducing the unemployment of long-term unemployed, low skilled and the persons with disabilities in order to move closer to EU average;
- smaller regional disparities in unemployment rates;
- higher number of disadvantaged persons employed in the social economy;
- individualised approach to the provision of employment services;
- the functional partnerships in the field of employment services;
- better preparedness of employees, employers, and institutions for the labour market changes, green jobs support;
- higher participation rates of the parents of young children, especially women, in the labour market;
- higher active participation rate of seniors in community life.

Expected results ERDF (SO i,):

- higher number of actively developing social enterprises;
- better access to workplaces providing employment services for all clients, including people with disabilities;
- higher number of debarrierized workplaces;
- at least 1000 new places in childcare facilities for children under 3 years;
- better availability of electronic employment services, also accessible to disadvantaged groups.

Quality inclusive education

The priority is to provide quality, attractive, and inclusive education at all levels, to help the graduates (children, pupils, students) realise their full potential, develop global competencies and have them prepare responsibly for the transition to higher levels of education and for the labour market. Removing barriers for disadvantaged groups in education will further reduce early school leaving and increase participation in upper secondary, university and LLL education. Concerning the early childhood education and care, it is necessary to improve support for families, especially in the MRCs, to ensure access to early childhood interventions, and enable access to health and social counselling, awareness-raising and adult education. There is a need to encourage the interest of pupils in studying at secondary schools by making the conditions of the individual fields of study more attractive, by making study accessible, and by ensuring equipment and by enhancing the employability of the graduates of the given field of study. The preconditions for a successful implementation of quality inclusive education are the introduction of systemic measures to prevent discrimination, the preparedness of teaching and professional staff, of the founders and managers of schools and school facilities for action in education and training system, ensuring sufficient teaching and professional staff capacities in schools and school facilities, access to a quality counselling system and prevention, removal of all types of barriers facing disadvantaged groups at all levels of education and better cooperation with all the relevant actors. Support must include the provision of accessible and high-quality infrastructure, better spatial conditions, instructional materials, technology and teaching equipment in schools and school facilities.

Expected results ESF+ (SO e, f,):

- increase of enrolment rate in pre-primary education to 95 % until 2030 (from 4 years to the beginning of compulsory primary education) with regard to children from disadvantaged groups, including better access to pre-primary education;
- adapting education and training and graduate profiles to match the labour market needs;
- raising the level of skills (e.g. transversal skills, reading, science and mathematics literacy, global competences) and key skills, including digital, in order to strengthen resilience to distance and online learning;
- reducing the gaps in gaining the skills among pupils from vulnerable groups, especially pupils from socially disadvantaged background and pupils with their first language other than the language of instruction, also in view of the difficult access to education during COVID-19;
- higher proportion of young people from disadvantaged groups with a higher level of education;
- reduction of the share of early school leavers to 5 % until 2030;
- reduction of the share of pupils educated in a special educational stream;
- elimination of segregation and discrimination of Roma children and pupils;

- increasing the number of students (early leavers) who attend second chance education in a primary school course or in an "F" study program;
- strengthening the support of pupils (early school leavers) participating in second chance education (eg career counseling, increasing the involvement of employers in F departments);
- reducing problems associated with socio-pathological phenomena (hate speech, bullying, extremism) in schools and school facilities, as well as among young people;
- strengthening the resilience of the education system and its actors to crises;
- higher attractiveness of the teaching profession;
- enhanced personnel capacities and a better preparedness of the teaching and professional staff and persons undergoing education and training for their future work in the educational system.

Expected results ERDF (SO ii,):

- ensuring the removal of physical barriers in 70 % of schools and school facilities until 2030;
- modernization of the infrastructure of schools and school facilities in order to increase the quality of education for the development of competences, equal access to quality, inclusive education and training (e. g. building and modernization of classrooms, equipment);
- better infrastructure accessibility for physical activities, contributing to the comprehensive personality development throughout the education process, integration of pupils into social groups, improvement of physical and health state and physical literacy of pupils.

Skills for better adaptability and inclusion

The aim is to contribute to economic growth and social cohesion by promoting the participation of adults in further education and thus helping everyone to develop his or her personal, civic and employment potential. In order to take into account the individual situation of individuals, especially those facing barriers to participation in further education (e.g. early school leavers, low-skilled people, people whose qualifications do not meet current labour market requirements, MRCs, migrants, etc.), it will be necessary to ensure the availability of counselling and support services, strengthen their infrastructure and also support them in acquiring basic skills, including at least a basic level of digital skills so that they are better prepared to participate in working and social life, as well as the electronic functioning of the state services (e-government, e-health, etc.).

Expected results ESF+ (SO d, g,):

- contribution to the objective of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan by increasing the participation of adults in education and training by 2030 to 60%;
- increasing the number of employed persons who have gained a better position on the labour market by increasing their qualifications/regualification;
- better preparedness of the workforce for the challenges related to changes in the labour market as well as green and digital transformation;
- higher participation of SME employees and self-employed persons in further education;
- better skills of individuals to manage their education and careers in a lifelong perspective;
- 80% of adults have at least a basic level of digital skills.

Expected results ERDF (SO ii,):

- created a functional system for providing individual educational accounts;
- improving the quality of initial and further vocational education and training through modern infrastructure and quality material and technical equipment in inter-company training centres, centres of excellence of VET and CVET.

The Youth Guarantee

Past crises have shown that young people belong to the most vulnerable groups. The results of the 2014-2020 Guarantee Assessment show that Youth Guarantee schemes do not reach most of the young people in NEETs who are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and do not have access to quality education and training, or face barriers in transition from school to work. Regarding the growing number of young people dropping out of compulsory school. There is a need for a functioning system of second chance education available to every early school leaver. Analysis of the situation and location of NEETs in the regions reflecting the needs of regional labour markets is missing. It will be necessary to support the provision of integrated guidance for young people to better identify their potential for active participation in the labour market or in further education with a strong emphasis on the development of green, digital and entrepreneurial skills in particular by promoting the emergence of one-stop-shops. The measures will also include awareness-raising and information activities. Due to growing number of young inactive people, it will

be important to ensure the prevention of young people' unemployment and engage non-governmental youth organizations. The measures included will be implemented through the National Plan for Strengthening the Youth Guarantee in the Slovak Republic with a view to 2030.

Expected results ESF+ (SO a, f, l):

- lower number of young people in NEET, in order to move closer to EU average;
- raising the level of digital skills;
- reducing the share of early school leaver to 5 % until 2030;
- the existence of a network of counselling, mentoring, and support activities for young people;
- higher interest of young people in entrepreneurship;
- established system of detecting and monitoring young people's needs;
- more learning opportunities for young people, especially of those in a NEET situation, aimed at acquiring the necessary skills.

Active inclusion and accessible services

Interventions in the field of the deinstitutionalisation of facilities and social services and substitute care will support the development of existing and the emergence of new social services and measures of social protection of children and social curatorship measures and professional activities of a community nature. As part of active inclusion, there is a need to raise public awareness of the rights and lives of the people with disabilities, of violence within families and against seniors and children, and of the rights of children. The challenge will be to support the implementation of an integrated and functional long-term care system, uniform assessment activities, a flat allowance for dependent persons, early intervention, as well as a more attractive employment of social and health professionals and increase quality of social and healthcare services and the issues related to the quality of social and health services and the implementation of other measures. The comprehensive support mechanism of the MRC will ensure the compliance of individual measures and activities, synergies and the strengthening of financial resources.

Systematic awareness, prevention, and assistance work for disadvantaged groups including the MRCs will ensure that the barriers to healthcare are overcome and will contribute to a better health self-care. The challenge is a better level of the preparedness of healthcare workers to provide healthcare for disadvantaged groups including MRC. Shortcomings in social safety nets and a limited availability of social affordable rental housing need targeted interventions.

The establishment of social housing enterprises should create space for the development of socially beneficial rental housing and thus reduce exclusion from housing and prevent homelessness. Measures to eradicate the worst forms of poverty need to be continued, including through the introduction of community development planning measures. In accordance with EU Council Recommendation 2021/1004 establishing a European Child Guarantee, special attention will be paid to the prevention and eradication of child poverty. Relevant stakeholders will be involved in identifying children in need and children in precarious family situations. Measures will be focused on addressing the social exclusion of children with a view to breaking the intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage and reducing the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expected results ESF+ (SO h, i, k, l):

- reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 2030 to 13,3%;
- removing of 24,000 children from the risk of poverty and social exclusion;
- fewer children in institutional care and a higher rate of children brought up in foster families as a form of alternative care (reducing the number of children placed in social and legal protection services facilities to 50.5% by 2025);
- better availability of early intervention and care for children with high-risk or non-standard development;
- more capacities of social services at the community level and their improved availability;
- established functional system for evaluating quality conditions of provided social services;
- more counselling services available to persons experiencing violence (in particular for women, children and seniors);
- existence of an integrated health and social approach to human care;
- better quality of life of the people dependent on long-term care;
- better quality and availability of primary aftercare and long-term healthcare;
- better community health conditions for specific target groups
- enhanced primary and secondary disease prevention programmes to ensure that health inequalities are reduced;
- establishing psycho-social centres providing long-term community-type care for patients with mental disorders;
- assistance with the integration of third-country nationals;

- better access to the social crisis intervention services;
- better access to housing for specific target groups;
- higher level of awareness of the people at risk of poverty and social exclusion about health, healthy nutrition and a healthy lifestyle;
- better access to personalised counselling for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, in order to strengthen the competences of individuals to address their needs of living;
- enhanced primary and secondary disease prevention programmes to ensure that health inequalities are reduced;
- existence of an integrated health and social approach to human care;
- better quality and availability of primary and long-term healthcare.

Expected results ERDF (SO iii, v.):

- higher number of social and legal protection facilities at community level also available to children with disabilities;
- higher quality of provided social and legal protection services through ICT tools;
- higher number of family-type of social and legal protection facilities;
- more capacities of social services at the community level and their improved availability;
- higher accommodation capacity of specialised safe homes for victims of violence;
- better access to the social crisis intervention services;
- increased access to outpatient health care in unattractive regions;
- strengthened network of facilities providing institutional care within long-term care;
- strengthened network of mobile facilities providing long-term care within the entire territory of the SR;
- better quality of life of the people dependent on long-term care;
- better quality and availability of primary and long-term healthcare;
- establishing psycho-social centres providing long-term community-type care for patients with mental disorders;
- better access to affordable, available and accessible housing for specific target groups;
- improving the material and technical equipment of community centres.

Active inclusion of Roma Communities

The priority will be given to a comprehensive approach in addressing outstanding challenges in selected MRC localities, where progress has been demonstrated in the implementation of measures supported in the past. Support for all MRC localities will be available also under the specific targeting of the other PO4 priorities. This approach allows to fulfil targets of the *Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030* and its action plans for employment, education, housing, health and the fight against anti-Roma racism, and participation support.

Expected results ESF+ (SO j):

- completion of implementation of a comprehensive integrated approach in a specific number of localities;
- reducing the number of illegal dwellings, characterised by extremely low hygienic standards;
- increasing the number of consolidated ownership relations in MRCs;
- an operational system of data collection and updating on the living conditions in the MRCs;
- higher number of settlements (including MRCs) with community development plans, with emphasis on the equality between women and men, on non-discrimination, the identification of the needs of the young people, people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and on the ways to address them, with an active involvement of community members;
- increasing of administrative capacity and financial support for Roma and proRoma NGOs..

Expected results ERDF (SO iii):

- better access of the residents of isolated and segregated MRCs to social infrastructure and increasing hygienic standards of their housing;
- higher share of MRCs having access to basic infrastructure and technical equipment;
- established system of efficient waste management in MRC localities;
- reduction of the share of Roma living in substandard housing to 44%.

Targets and milestones will be specified in Programme Slovakia. The main outcomes include: triple the share of children from marginalized Roma communities aged 3 - 6 years in pre-primary education; lower the share of persons from marginalized Roma communities living in substandard housing by fourth or double the share of persons from MRC aged 20-64 who are employed (employment rate).

Social innovations and experiments

The aim of the interventions is to support the validation of new and better approaches to the labour market and education inclusiveness, active inclusion and interventions targeting disadvantaged persons and persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with a view to implement measures to facilitate their social integration at local, regional, or national level. Social innovations may include new products, processes, services, organisational arrangements, technologies, regulations, institutional norms, or functions.

Expected results ESF+ (SO a, f, h,):

- higher number of innovative projects;
- higher number of social experiment projects.

Food and material deprivation

Reducing poverty and social exclusion is one of the long-term priorities of the public policies in the SR. The rate of poverty and social exclusion fell in 2020 from 15.2% to 14.8% compared to 2019. The continuing challenge is to provide food and basic material (hygiene) needs for the most deprived, especially homeless people, who are one of the most vulnerable target groups, in order to reduce the overall economic burden of these risk groups in the material need system. Food and material deprivation are understood as a lack of food and basic hygiene needs of the recipients of assistance in material need and of homeless people.

Ensuring food and hygiene packages and hot meals distribution, as well as the distribution of donated food, continues to be a necessity across the territory of the SR. These activities should be complemented by accompanying social activities aimed at addressing food and material deprivation.

Expected results **ESF+ (SO m)**:

- lowering the number of people facing the most severe types of poverty and material deprivation by 70,000 by 2030.

For information on activities of PO4 implemented through ITI see Programme Slovakia.

POLICY OBJECTIVE 5 – A EUROPE CLOSER TO CITIZENS

Fund: ERDF

Measures in this area aim in particular at improving the quality of life in all regions for all social groups, ensuring the sustainability of competitiveness and the development of environmentally and innovation-oriented economies and the harmonisation of regional and territorial development and community development, while exploiting the specific development potential of the regions concerned, through the implementation of the ITI instrument and based on Integrated territorial strategies (ITS).

In Slovakia there will be altogether 8 ITS implemented which go beyond NUTS III with the territory of self-governing regions. The urban areas and non urban areas of 8 self governing regions will be supported through the implementation of the ITI.

17 urban areas are defined to support cohesion policy objectives. Similarly, the sustainable urban development will be supported within these 17 territories. The main criterion for defining supported urban areas is the Concept of Territorial Development of the Slovak Republic and taking into account the minimum number of dwellers of the core town. This document served as the basis for defining SUD territories whose borders were detailed in cooperation with socio-economic partners in the territory. It applies to the following SUD territories with core cities: Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín, Prievidza-Nováky, Žilina, Martin, Liptovský Mikuláš-Ružomberok, Banská Bystrica, Zvolen, Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Prešov, Poprad-Kežmarok-Svit, Humenné, Michalovce, and Košice. The list of SUD territories may be slightly modified during negotiations of the Programme Slovakia.

Slovakia allocates 8,39 % of ERDF (other than for technical assistance) for sustainable urban development.

In order to identify the key regional development challenges, specific territorial needs and to propose appropriate solutions, regional and local authorities have, in accordance with the partnership principle, developed territorial strategies under Article 29 of the CPR (NUTS3 level) and Article 11 of the ERDF Regulation (SUD). Their aim was to analyze the development needs and potential of the regions and to propose an integrated approach to addressing them. The list of operations that will be supported by the Programme Slovakia is also a part of these strategies.

The ITS is prepared as the regional strategy (Economic and social development plans) on the NUTS3 level integrating the SUD ITS which is prepared separately for the purpose of implementation of the SUD allocation.

Specifically, the detailed ITI and SUD activities under the 5 objectives of cohesion policy will be financed primarily from the ERDF. Key activities for ITI are in accordance with the competences of territorial governments.

These activities will cover areas under PO1 – 4 such as: Promoting smart cities and regions, Promoting vocational education in the context of Industrial Revolution 4.0, Promoting Construction of public water mains and sewerage network, Support for prevention of waste production, building of centres/networks for reuse of products, Separate collection of municipal waste with a focus on biodegradable waste, Promoting preparation of waste for reuse and recycling of waste, Support for biological and landscape diversity by building green and blue infrastructure, Support for public transportation, Support for bicycle transportation, II. and III. class roads, Regional transport services and infrastructure, Deinstitutionalisation of facilities and services, active inclusion, long-term care system (ERDF activities), Development of education infrastructure (ERDF activities). Detailed scope of activities implemented through ITI is identified in Programme Slovakia.

Expected results:

- Reduced regional disparities and promoting of sustainable development of 8 slovak selfgoverning regions, in particular through infrastructure building (economic, social, environmental), contribution to the EGD

Fostering the integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental development, culture natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security will be also supported by following priority measures under this policy objective (PO5) :

Building administrative and analytical and strategic capacities of local and regional stakeholders

There is a need to focus on the development of analytical-strategic capacities of local and regional stakeholders and long-term training of staff at all levels of public administration, in accordance with the applicable legal and competence frameworks, while putting to use the know-how from establishing the competent units at the state level, the outcome being a better performance of self-government roles, the optimization of processes, and the development of better public policies in territorial self-government.

Expected results:

- strengthened active inclusion of citizens and promoting equal opportunities and active participation and offering better employability;
- higher level of analytical-strategic capacities;
- trained administrative capacities in regional and local public authorities;
- implementing approaches to policy-making based on data and impact assessment of local and regional policies, i.e., evaluating the quality of provision and availability of public services;
- implementing territorial strategy projects.

Better public policies and open governance

The aim of this area of support is to increase the efficiency of public administration and to increase the quality of public services provided by implementing decision-making and public policy-making based on the principles of open governance.

Expected results:

- enhanced cooperation between local government and civil society, establishing efficiently functioning inter-sectoral partnerships;
- enhanced level of knowledge and awareness of citizens and local-government officers and employees in areas covering participation, communication, and cooperation;
- created conditions for the active participation of citizens and strengthening the role of communities in the processing of public affairs, including the use of public resources, and ensuring the full application of the rule of law;
- increased transparency and public participation in decision-making processes in public administration;
- strengthened capacity and cooperation in the region for the design and implementation of development policies and programmes;
- enhanced rate and efficiency of the participation of socio-economic partners and the representatives of civil society in public policy making, implementing, and monitoring, including the involvement of marginalised, vulnerable groups and young people.

Safe physical environment of municipalities, cities, and regions

The main goal of this activity is preventing controversial phenomena and tension in communities, municipalities, and regions, increasing the safety of residents and visitors in health protection, crime prevention, provision of services and assistance to the victims of crime, awareness-raising and dissemination of information among citizens.

Expected results:

- completed security infrastructure for crime prevention;
- raised citizens' awareness (especially of at-risk groups) in the field of crime prevention;
- improved access to services aimed at providing assistance to the victims of crime and to potential victims of crime;
- improved public understanding of democracy, of democratic state institutions, and of human rights;
- enhanced capacity of local government to prevent radicalisation and other undesirable social phenomena and the ability to work with the risky groups of the population in urban and rural environments;
- enhanced media and information literacy and the level of the critical thinking of citizens and of local government employees;
- developed security situation analyses, local and regional deradicalisation strategies and their regular monitoring;
- improved regional airport infrastructure and public airports with a critical state of air operations safety.

Regional and local infrastructure for physical activities and leisure

The main objective of this activity is to raise the citizens' interest in physical activities in towns and municipalities and to create new leisure opportunities in order to promote a healthy lifestyle, social/ community development, and crime prevention. The implementation of this activity will contribute to increasing the physical activity of citizens of all age groups, leading to a healthier society and a better integration of citizens into social groups. These objectives will be met through measures aimed at building a regional sports infrastructure available to the general public to accommodate their physical and sporting activities, in order to support intergenerational socialising and leisure activities of communities living close to sports grounds, including elderly citizens or citizens with disabilities.

Expected results:

- reconstruction and construction of sports infrastructure and recreational cycling routes, infrastructure for cycling transport;
- increasing the quantity and quality of local infrastructure serving sports and leisure activities of persons of all ages;
- habit formation in children and their internalisation of the concepts of discipline, responsibility, integrity, fair play, and cooperation;
- using the capacities of supported facilities on a more massive scale, increasing the number of people involved in physical and leisure activities within communities with an emphasis on working with young people;
- improving analytical and statistical resources with respect to the impact of physical activities on the citizens' lifestyle.

Improving management, services and infrastructure supporting cultural heritage, community development, and sustainable tourism

Support for cultural heritage, community development, and sustainable tourism should focus on revitalising the territory, professional infrastructure, equipping and developing the destination management of regions by exploiting their endogenous potential and increasing the awareness of visitors and residents of the territory. The assets that exist in the territory require improvement as they are among the vital elements contributing to the development of local economies, especially in the regions with a low industrial growth potential. The support should include the coordination of existing activities in the territory, reflecting existing opportunities and actively initiating the emergence of new activities in the territory to improve or maintain the competitive advantage of the destination in question.

This includes investments aimed at preserving, modernizing and building tourist infrastructure that will enable the interconnection of natural and cultural heritage attractions in the area, as well as investments to restore national cultural monuments and their more efficient and intensive use, support other cultural infrastructure, including sacred, historical and natural localities, monuments and disused buildings, with an emphasis on the popularization of traditions and history, art and culture in order to strengthen their educational potential, increase the attractiveness and development of regions, digitize and improve conditions for culture, art and community activities.

Emphasis will be put on making cultural and natural heritage more widely available to the general public, on the value added with respect to educating the population and to the creative industries, support for local and regional and national minority cultures and community development in the territory.

The aim of the activities is to create a comprehensive tourist infrastructure, building facilities for the preservation and development of tangible and intangible cultural heritage with the aim of balanced development of the territory with positive impacts on community development, local or regional employment and local business environment.

Expected results:

- enhancing the economic benefits of tourism in the regions;
- improving the construction and technical condition and equipment of cultural monuments, cultural infrastructure in the regions incl. sacred, historical sites and monuments in the regions;
- restoration of national cultural monuments, including cultural and natural monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage List;
- improving the condition of disused objects and their use for the development of local communities;
- strengthening the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation;
- revitalising and equipping for action monuments contributing to the protection of cultural heritage;
- revitalisation of public spaces - landscape architecture buildings with the construction of green infrastructure in towns and villages, including the modernisation of technical infrastructure in public spaces;
- creation of a comprehensive tourist offer in the regions and building analytical and statistical resources in the area of movement of visitors and the public;
- improving the accessibility of regional, tourist attractions and raising awareness about them;
- increasing the interactivity of the information presented and strengthening the tourist and educational potential of cultural and natural tourism assets;

European capital of culture 2026

The aim is to encourage residents and tourists to visit more frequently national cultural monuments including cultural and natural monuments included in the UNESCO World Heritage List to indulge in cultural and leisure activities. A special allocation will be earmarked to a concrete city hosting the events of the European Capital of Culture 2026.

The activities supported by PO5 will be a complementary source of allocation to other specific objectives supporting integrated territorial development.

THE JUST TRANSITION FUND (JTF)

Fund: JTF

The JTF will focus on promoting territories (economic diversification of the territories) most affected by the transition towards climate neutrality, to prevent an increase in regional disparities and to retrain and actively integrate their employees and jobseekers. In Slovakia, there are three regions displaying the potential for support under the JTF, namely: Trenčín Region (specifically the Upper Nitra Region), Banská Bystrica Region, and Košice Region, the relevant territories will be more precisely defined in the Territorial Just Transition Plan.

In the subsequent sections individual pillars (Economic diversification, Sustainable environment and Quality of life and social infrastructure) are further split into three regions for closer specification. Activities proposed will contribute to fulfilment of the specific goals and objectives defined at European and national level. While the first chapter of the partnership agreement describes the specific challenges the regions are facing, this section outlines measures to address these challenges as well as the expected results that these measures should achieve.

The measures under Pillar I Economic diversification contribute to the fulfilment of the strategic objectives set in Research and Innovation for Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the period 2021-2027. The strategic objectives that will be supported by suggested measures include, in particular, increasing the number of people employed in R&D and R&I (target value: 24 000 by 2027) and increasing the share of private sector R&D expenditure in relation to GDP (target value: 0,86 % by 2027). The measures will eventually contribute in increasing the employment of the population aged 20 to 64 by 2030 to 76,5%.

The measures under Pillar II Sustainable environment contribute to meet the EU's energy efficiency targets for 2030 and the strategic goals of the EU's transition to carbon neutrality by 2050, as well as new EU climate objectives under the Fit for 55 Package. In addition, these measures will contribute to the fulfilment of the national objectives set in NCEP as well as to the objectives defined in other strategic documents such as Envirostrategy 2030 and Waste Prevention Programme of the SR and Waste Management Programme of the SR. More specifically, results of the activities will contribute to reach EU goals on GHG emission reduction (- 55% by 2030), national goal by increasing total share of renewable energy sources (19,2 % by 2030) and share of renewable energy sources in transport (14 % by

2030). Moreover, results of the activities supported will promote national objectives on energy efficiency (30,3 % by 2030).

The measures under Pillar III Quality of life and social infrastructure will contribute to the ambitious EU targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan by increasing the participation of adults in education and training by 2030 to 60%. The aim of this pillar is also to increase better preparedness of workforce for the challenges related to changes in the labour market due to the transition. The measures under this pillar will complement ESF+ measures especially within enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education and vocational training systems, improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, vocational training, and lifelong learning services, promoting active inclusion, with a view to promote equal opportunities, active participation and better employability, the socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups of people, especially in terms of transition challenges.

The Upper Nitra Region

Pillar I: Economic diversification

The main objective of this pillar is to address direct result of transition as significant job losses due to the cessation of coal mining and combustion at the power plant. This will lead to more than 2 200 direct job losses. The other issue of the region is related to the outflow of young people. Population statistics in recent years confirm the trend of depopulation of the region, so it is important to set measures to create new attractive jobs with high added value. Moreover, the region faces the issue of the lower availability of opportunities in R&D&I and lower activities of SMEs in the region.

Therefore, measures under this pillar will support the development of new economic sectors to create new jobs, support start-ups and development of SMEs, in order to replace the jobs, which will be lost in the mining and energy sectors. The measures of this pillar will also support R&D&I, which will bring new job opportunities for high-skilled job seekers and improve the innovation potential of local businesses. Support specifically addresses the need to create new opportunities for people who will lose their jobs as a direct result of the transition, but also to create new opportunities for the younger generation that will no longer find jobs in the declining mining sector. It will also support investments in digital connectivity which is limited in the region.

Expected results:

- creation of new sustainable jobs and new opportunities for the young generation as well as for the employees of the mining industry;
- improved position of SMEs in the region, supporting digitalization and improving conditions for development new business, including start-ups;
- increased innovation activities of SMEs in the region through the support of projects focused on arising economic areas in the region as well as the new sectors of economy;
- increased level of innovation, research and development in the region;
- improved cooperation between SMEs and R&D&I centres to enhance the innovation ecosystem.

Pillar II: Sustainable environment

The pillar II specifically addresses the needs and opportunities to remediate and repurpose the industrial sites of the mining and energy company. A total of seven industrial areas have been identified in the Upper Nitra region, which are in some way marked by previous activities in mining and energy. These areas will have to undergo a proper transformation in order to serve the development of the region in the near future. In addition, the region faces the need to redevelop the energy sector after the phase-out of the coal-fired Nováky power plant, when new sources of heating will be needed. Another issue is related to the energy poverty. According to independent studies assessing the current state of public and residential buildings in the region there is a high potential for energy savings, which is greater than 50% of current consumption.

The pillar II will support the measures helping to remediate the negative environmental impact of the mining and coal-fired energy generation in the region and to support new sustainable energy solutions in line with the objectives of the transition to climate neutrality. The aim of the measures is to redevelop the current industrial areas for a new use, which could include redevelopment of brownfield industrial parks into new commercial or residential zones, zones with a recreational or cultural function (preserving the industrial technical heritage), or an agriculture function. The aim of the intervention is also focused on support of new opportunities in new emerging sectors and technologies, such as hydrogen production and energy storage, which could utilise the existing industrial infrastructure present in the region, redeveloped industrial areas and enable further development of sustainable railway and local public transportation in the region. The measures of energy efficiency projects are closely linked to a possible increase in the share of RES in the new district heating project.

Expected results:

- reduced risk of energy poverty and increased energy efficiency of public and other buildings;
- remediation of environmental burdens and other negative environmental impacts and to reutilisation of land that is currently not utilised due to mining activities;
- enhanced circular economy;
- increased share of RES in the final energy consumption and the use of hydrogen;
- increased promotion of sustainable local transport.

Pillar III: Quality of life and social infrastructure (measures under this pillar will complement ESF+ measures)

The region faces great challenges in relation to the expected job losses as a result of the transition from coal. The analysis of the region shows a high mismatch between the current educational structure of the population and the needs of the labour market. Large numbers of job seekers will need to be requalified and will need help to find new jobs, and in some cases a social safety network will be needed to avoid the negative social consequences of mass layoffs. Following the termination of heavy industry activities and the launch of new projects in the context of economic diversification, the need to reconcile education and skills will be even more important. Another great challenge of the region is the outflow of young people. Last but not least, the health of the population is strongly hit by environmental impact of mining and coal processing (respiratory and oncological diseases, high invalidity index).

The measures under this pillar includes support for the improvement of education in the region to prepare the new workforce for new jobs and support for the upskilling and reskilling of the existing workforce, including in the new sectors of economy. In addition, it includes strengthening of social support and social services for vulnerable groups of people, who will be impacted by the transition from coal, specifically people who will lose their jobs and may need the support of social services or support on the job market. Important are also the measures that should address the overall attractiveness of the region from the perspective of the quality of life, especially for young generation in the fields of education, social, sports and cultural-creative activities. These measures complement Pillar I measures for attractive jobs for young people. Moreover, the measures within this pillar address the health situation of the population, which has been negatively impacted by decades of industry and energy production and the resulting environmental contamination. The support includes the healthcare area, including building on the tradition of medical spas in the region.

Expected results:

- increased attractiveness of the region in the perspective of quality of life, especially for young generation, which will lead to reduction of depopulation trend;
- increased attractiveness of the subregion for residents and tourists;
- increased cooperation of the educational institutions with the employers specifically focused on research, development and innovations;
- elimination of mismatch of skills of the job seekers and skills required by job opportunities by upskilling and reskilling;
- improved health of the population, as well as healthcare and social care services.

The Košice Region

Pillar I: Economic diversification

The aim of the pillar I is reflecting the main challenges of the region related to the needs of the existing economic ecosystem endangered by transition to climate neutrality. Lack of attractive job opportunities for the young generation, low level of economic diversification and entrepreneurship activity of SMEs will be covered by supporting of activities focused on promoting entrepreneurship establishment, start-up and acceleration of businesses in new sectors. Support of JTF will be focused on investment to SMEs, including micro-enterprises and start-ups, leading to economic diversification and modernization and reconversion. The supported activities will also lead to creation of business incubators, co-working centres, technology centres and hubs to boost motivation to do business also by young people.

The measures will improve the diversification of the local economy and decrease its dependence on industry. It will also support the preservation of existing jobs if job losses driven by the decarbonisation efforts can be avoided. In addition, SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurship will be supported to increase their activities in the region and decrease dependency on larger enterprises. A special focus will be given to job creation in existing, new or redeveloped brownfield industrial parks.

The region's challenge linked to low exploitation of the potential in R&D&I will be covered by promoting interdisciplinary research and innovation and their application in practice with a focus on new sectors, promoting research cooperation and innovation through innovation centres, tech hubs, but also support for research and innovation in enterprises. Eventually the measures will support existing R&D&I activities with focus on clean energy (hydrogen

and battery technologies), circular economy, energy efficiency, smart grids, energy storage, and development and implementation of IoT in various areas.

Expected results:

- increased number of innovative jobs, providing attractive job opportunities for young generation;
- increased level of innovation, digitalization and the use of new technologies in the SME sector;
- improved network cooperation among research institutions, businesses and other stakeholders in the region;
- improved innovation infrastructure and adequate information dissemination between the stakeholders in research and innovation;
- increased technological and digital transformation of enterprises and the innovativeness of SMEs in the region;
- increased diversification of economy and improved resilience.

Pillar II: Sustainable environment

The aim of the pillar II is to contribute in addressing the region's major challenges in terms of low exploitation of the potential in RES, high level of pollution, gaps in circular economy practices, low energy efficiency of buildings and the increasing number of abandoned industrial sites. The challenges of the region will be covered by activities focused on promoting the circular economy and energy production from RES, including support for the production of green hydrogen. The supported activities, which will lead to elimination of environmental burdens and impacts caused by coal combustion, consist of supporting conversion and restoration of polluted areas and sites from industrial and energy sector. The activities will be also focused on the reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the energy efficiency of buildings and support for local electric and zero emission mobility.

The measures specifically address the need to react to the phase out of fossil fuel power and heat generation in the region, where the created gap in energy production can be closed by a combination of energy efficiency interventions and utilisation of the renewable energy potential (geothermal, solar). At the same time, the measures focus on supporting smart measures and innovative solutions for increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and the intelligent use of energy resources in cities and region. In addition, coal phase-out will create opportunities for land rehabilitation and brownfield redevelopment of the industrial site of the power plant Vojany. The projects will create both temporary and sustainable jobs and thus partially compensate for the job losses in the declining climate-intensive industries. Further, investments in innovative decarbonisation projects and hydrogen projects in the region will create additional new jobs in new economic sectors. The measures have a strategic importance for further diversification and modernisation of the local economy from the industrial activities, increasing the attractiveness of the region for youth and improving the quality of life.

Expected results:

- increased use of RES and the use of hydrogen;
- reduced vulnerability to energy poverty by improving the energy efficiency of public and other buildings;
- remediation and revitalisation of environmental impacts caused by coal-based power and heat generation.

Pillar III: Quality of life and social infrastructure (measures under this pillar will complement ESF+ measures)

The Košice Region has a significant share of people employed in industry, including the carbon intensive industries. The region expects a high number of layoffs as a result of the implementation of decarbonisation projects. One of the key issues in the region is low preparedness and mismatch of skills of workers and job-seekers with the future needs of labour market as well as insufficient level of education related to the potential in new technologies and industries, emerging sectors in the region (including IT sector).

Therefore, the priority of the activities under this pillar is to support the development of new skills for new emerging sectors of the economy to prepare the next generation of the workforce. It includes the support for comprehensive education in new technologies and circular economy (hydrogen, batteries, materials, digitization, data science, robotics), support for courses, training and retraining to improve employability and support for career counselling and assistance in the labour market. The measures specifically aim to prepare job seekers for new jobs in new economic sectors as a replacement for the job opportunities in the declining steel sector and develop new skills needed for emerging technologies, such as decarbonisation technologies, clean energy, hydrogen, energy storage and digitisation. In addition, new job opportunities will be created for the younger generation that will no longer find sufficient job opportunities in the steel industry. Such job opportunities will be linked to new skills to be developed and supported under pillar I.

Expected results:

- increased attractiveness of the subregions for residents and tourists;

- creation of new attractive jobs for the young generation outside the industry sector, as well as for the employees threatened by unemployment in the process of climate transition;
- improved matching skills with current demand for qualified personnel, reduction of structural unemployment by capacity building of graduates with the skills needed for the future – in relation to digitisation, hydrogen technologies, electric mobility technologies or data science;
- increased potential in emerging sectors;
- decreased migration of young talents from the region.

The Banská Bystrica Region

Pillar I: Economic diversification

One of the key issues in the region is a low share of SMEs of the total employment. Even though the share of SMEs in the whole region is 76%, in the districts of Žiar nad Hronom and Revúca, it is significantly lower (68% and 55% respectively), below the national average. This leads to the low economic diversification of the local economy and its dependence on industry. In general, there is also low activity of SMEs, since almost 70% of SMEs have a low profit (under 5%) or generate a loss. The other issue is related to the depopulation risk. The Banská Bystrica region experiences the lowest life expectancy of men and largest decline in depopulation (between 2007 and 2018, it lost more than 2% of its population). This decline was mainly due to the negative balance of migration, especially young people.

Therefore, the measures are focused on development of new economic sectors creation of new jobs in these sectors of economy, support for start-ups, the development of SMEs and creation of jobs for low-skilled workers and jobs in rural areas. New job opportunities, mainly in rural areas should therefore stabilise the region and address the issue of depopulation and human capital crisis. In addition, the measures aim to support digitalisation, the research cooperation focused on new technologies as well as existing R&D&I activities. Moreover, the pillar focuses on the promotion of ecotourism in the region, in order to drive the demand for ecotourism services and thus help to generate new jobs in the sector.

Expected results:

- improved economic diversification of local economies, especially in the rural areas leading to a better quality of life;
- creation of new jobs in rural areas in traditional or promising sectors, such as tourism, forestry or agriculture;
- increased activities of SMEs in the region and a higher share of SMEs of employment;
- reduced scale of unemployment, including structural unemployment associated with the climate transition;
- improved network cooperation among university, R&D and businesses;
- increased transfer of innovative solutions and technologies to local enterprises;
- implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism and ecotourism;
- increased digital connectivity;
- improved attractiveness of the region and reduce the negative migration trend.

Pillar II: Sustainable environment

The region faces a risk of energy poverty. The region has a potential to reduce heat consumption in public buildings in the region by up to 70%. Therefore, the potential for increasing energy efficiency in buildings is significant. Moreover, the region has a potential to reduce CO₂ emissions within transport sector which has the highest share of emission of sectors not included in the ETS. The region is one of the most polluted regions of Slovakia and some districts have significant issues with air pollution, driven by industry transport and the burning of solid fuels. The CO₂ emissions solely in the transport sector are forecast to increase in the period 2020 - 2030 by 0,05 to 0,17 million tonnes under different scenarios.

Thus, the measures are focused on support for the implementation of local projects of electric and zero emission mobility, which could contribute to GHG emissions savings in the transport sector. The measure will focus on local mobility (intracity transport), for example on the introduction of ecological vehicles in public transport, infrastructure for the electric mobility or projects supporting alternative modes of transport, such as cycling. The measures will aim to support modernization projects in energy efficiency, the promotion of RES including the use of biomass and innovation within energy and industry sectors. The measures are focused on improvement of the environment and mitigation of the climate impacts, quality of life and to decrease its carbon footprint from other non-ETS sectors, since the current potential to reduce the CO₂ emissions from ETS installations by 2030 without a greater technological uptake is rather limited due to decarbonisation of emitters in the recent past.

Expected results:

- increased use of alternative modes of transport;
- improved energy efficiency of public buildings;
- improved utilisation of the potential of the region in the use of RES, including biomass as alternative energy sources leading to reduced vulnerability to energy poverty;
- remediation of environmental burdens caused by industrial production;
- increased use of green technologies in tourism leading to the implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism.

Pillar III: Quality of life and social infrastructure (measures under this pillar will complement ESF+ measures)

The main challenges of the region is depopulation issue, the low attractiveness of the region for the younger generation, low preparedness of the region for the future challenges. The key issue of the region consists of insufficient level of skills of jobseekers. More than a half of job seekers on the market have secondary vocational education, followed by job seekers with basic education (30% of candidates). There is a surplus of candidates with only basic education in region which creates significant labour market mismatches.

That's why the measures are focused on the development and improvement of the skills in the circular and digital economy and other skills of the future. The measures will also support new trainings and study programmes aimed at the new skills in emerging sectors and technologies, new training and education centres at universities, as well as at other institutions and businesses, including the national educational and upskilling programmes. The measures can also support cooperation between SMEs, universities and secondary vocational schools.

Expected results:

- improved matching skills with current demand for unqualified personnel and reduction of structural unemployment;
- increased attractiveness of the region;
- better preparedness and resilience of workforce to the rapid changes on labour market;
- increased digital, circular and financial literacy;
- improved network cooperation between SMEs, universities and secondary vocational schools.

2.2 Coordination, demarcation and complementarities between the Funds and, where appropriate, coordination between national and regional programmes – point (b)(ii) of Article 11(1)

Implementation structure

The operations supported by the ERDF, under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal, ESF+, CF and JTF will be implemented through a centralised Programme Slovakia for the period 2021 – 2027 (Programme Slovakia). The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic (MARD SR) will be responsible for the preparation of the CAP Strategic Plans as well as for the implementation of EMFAF. The MARD SR will be Managing Authority for the Operational Program Fisheries for the years 2021 - 2027. The Ministry of Interior of the SR will cover the implementation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.²⁶

The managing authority of Programme Slovakia is the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development, and Informatization of the SR (MIRDI SR), which is also responsible for the management and implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes supported by the ERDF. MIRDI SR will delegate functions to 10 intermediate bodies²⁷

The main responsibilities of the **Managing Authority (MA)** are as follows:

- programming and preparation of management documentation at the programme level, in cooperation with intermediate bodies and the relevant ministries (while MoLSAF SR is considered as the intermediate body for the implementation of ESF + activities in cooperation with the MA and IBs for ESF +);
- coordination and guidance of intermediate bodies; crisis management; IT monitoring system management; monitoring and evaluation in cooperation with the relevant ministry (while MoLSAF SR is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of ESF + activities);

²⁶ Resolution of the Government of the SR No. 329 of 27 May 2020 on the proposal to designate bodies responsible for coordination, management, control and audit of the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Plus, Cohesion Fund, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, Asylum and Migration Fund, Internal Security Fund and the Border and Visa Instrument in the programming period 2021-2027

²⁷ <https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/26553/1>

- preparation of calls, preparation of invitations for national projects, selection of operations and implementation of projects in areas for which no intermediate body is designated in cooperation with the relevant ministry.

The responsibilities of the **intermediate bodies** include mainly: participation in programming and preparation of management documentation at program level, preparation of calls and invitations for national projects; selection of operations; implementation of projects (with the exception of the public procurement control that will be carried out by the Public Procurement Office) in the areas of competence of the intermediate body.

The main responsibilities of the Public Procurement Office as an intermediate body include: co-operation with the Managing Authority in the preparation of management documentation for the area of contract control; ensuring the control of contracts, including the verification of the cost-effectiveness of expenditure on these contracts.

Delegated tasks will be defined in detail in the contracts for the performance of part of the tasks of the managing authority by the intermediate body.

Territorial government authorities will operate as Intermediate Bodies until the end of the 2014-2020 programming period. For the 2021-2027 programming period, the regional partners will be involved in the ITI implementation.

The governance mechanism of the ITI is based on the principles of partnership and multilevel governance is applied in particular to the preparation, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ITI.

The implementation mechanism of integrated territorial investment (ITI) is based on the partnership principle and multilevel governance is applied mainly in the development, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ITI, performed in partnership particularly with representatives of local governments.

Partnership Councils are a key institutional mechanism for setting territorial objectives at the regional level through integrated territorial strategies (ITS) and their implementation in the OP SK. Cooperation councils are a key institutional mechanism for SUD territories.

Concerning the development and implementation of ITS and ITI, the **Partnership Councils** are mainly responsible for:

- developing and approving ITS;
- approving project intents;
- coordinating ITS implementation;
- monitoring and assessing ITS implementation.

There are eight Partnership Councils, one at each Higher Territorial Unit (VÚC). They are established following the initiative of a VÚC and their operation is governed by the statute and rules of procedure of the SUD Cooperation Council

The **SUD Cooperation Councils** are established for 17 SUD territories. Their role, structure, responsibilities, performance of activities and decision-making are laid down in the statute and rules of procedure of the SUD Cooperation Council.

The statute and rules of procedure of the Partnership Council and the SUD Cooperation Council are approved by MIRDI.

The Partnership Council and the SUD Cooperation Council consist of members representing territorial local government, state administration and socio-economic partners.

The ITI implementation mechanism is set up by special working groups with the participation of representatives of SK8, the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia, the Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia, representatives of Higher Territorial Units (VÚC) and towns of sustainable urban development, and MIRDI. The aim is to fine-tune the ITI implementation mechanism through a partnership approach.

In order to support the development of quality projects, MIRDI plans to establish and support:

- MIRDI regional centres
- technical secretariats of Partnership Councils
- administrative capacities of SUD towns

Regional Centres as the integral part of the MIRDI SR represent the detached workplaces in the territory ensuring the performance of the MA competencies for the OP Slovakia according to the management documentation for the programming period 2021-2027 (eg. On-the-spot check, control of monitoring reports, archiving) for entities out of ITI. In relation to ITI only the so called Quality check to be carried out. MIRDI SR establishes 7 regional centres in individual NUTS3 regions, with the exception of the Bratislava region

The main task of the **technical secretariats** of the Partnership Councils will be to support the preparation and implementation of projects/integrated project packages, which are approved by the Partnership Council within the Integrated Territorial Strategy. The technical secretariats will provide:

- administrative and technical support to the activities of the Partnership Council;
- support in the preparation of ITI projects in line with the ITS at the regional level;
- support to the management and implementation of ITS projects – material, time and financial coordination of project implementation within integrated ITI projects, project-level monitoring, financial project management.

The technical secretariats of the Partnership Councils will be an integral part of the VÚC and their staff will be the VÚC staff.

SUD Administrative Capacities (AC) - In all core towns where sustainable urban development strategies are applied, SUD AC will be established to support the implementation of SUD strategies.

The key task of SUD AC will be to assist in and support the preparation and implementation of projects of the integrated territorial strategy of SUD. The aim is to ensure the preparation of quality projects in 17 SUD territories by building the AC in 17 SUD core territories.

A mechanism at the MIRDI level will be introduced to ensure complementarities and synergies between individual Cohesion policy objectives within the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal and European Territorial Cooperation programmes, as well as between the ERDF, ESF+, CF and JTF, further between Cohesion policy funds and other EU and national financial instruments and also with the Recovery and Resilience Plan. (See Annex 4)

Coordination of MRC support

The Government Office of the SR fulfils the role of an intermediate body for ERDF and ESF+ interventions related to specific MRC priority. Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities as an advisory body to the Government of the SR as well as the substantive coordinator of MRC agenda cooperates closely with IB. At the same time Office of the Plenipotentiary is an organisation part of the Office of the Government which secures sound co-ordination and common approach. Within the implementation of MRC approach, top- down approach will be applied with close cooperation of regional and local actors.

The supervision of the whole comprehensive integrated MRC approach will be ensured by the standard **Monitoring Committee**. The coherence of individual measures/activities will be ensured through the **Committee for Inclusion of MRC at the Monitoring Committee (MC)** for Programme Slovakia.

The Committee for Inclusion of MRC at the MC Programme Slovakia will be managed (coordinated) by the Government Office as the IB together with the plenipotentiary for Roma communities. Members of the Committee would include the GO SR, Office of the Plenipotentiary, representatives of local governments, representatives of relevant IBs, the managing authority (MIRDI SR) and representatives of other partners. These representatives would be selected from among the members of the MC for Programme Slovakia.

Key competencies of the Committee will be, above all, to:

- ensure coordination and implementation of an integrated approach combining ERDF and ESF+ resources,
- decides on the projects proposed not only from specific MRC priority but including those proposed from PO 2, 3, 4, 5 aimed at MRC inclusion (providing sub-statement to MC);
- ensure coordination with the close participation of regional and local actors and socio-economic partners,
- ensure the assessment and approval of the compliance of the prepared calls and written calls for proposals with the strategic documents in the territory, in particular their contribution to the implementation of the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030 and its action plans in order to maintain bottom-up principle;
- provide information to the MC for Programme Slovakia regarding the support of MRC.

Coordination with local partners/bottom-up approach

Cooperation / complementarity between the comprehensive approach and the ITS will be ensured by the participation of the GO / Plenipotentiary Office for Roma communities in the **State Administration Chamber** in updated Partnership Councils within the regions - oversight of the bottom-up principle and support of local initiatives and solutions taking into account the specific aspects of regions, ensuring cooperation/complementarity between the

“national/comprehensive” approach and ITS. In addition, a specific thematic working group will be set up in regions with a significant representation of the MRC to oversee the application of a horizontal approach supporting MRC.

In order to ensure the compliance of operations supported by EU funds with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and compliance with the obligations arising from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and accessibility in accordance with its Art. 9, the mechanism of horizontal principles (HP) will be coordinated at the national level. In accordance with the competence law, the body for the application of HP will be the relevant MoLSAEO SR. The division of competencies and the way of applying the HP will be included in the HP mechanism, and will be binding on all the entities responsible for the implementation of EU funds. Compliance with HP in the implementation processes will be ensured through disqualification criteria.

The SR will ensure that the objectives of the Funds shall be pursued in line with the objective of promoting sustainable development as set out in Article 11 TFEU, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle.

Relevant partners took part in developing the Partnership Agreement of the SR for the 2021-2027 period, in accordance with the EC Delegated Regulation on the European code of conduct on partnership²⁸. The principle of partnership and multi-level governance will also be respected during its subsequent implementation.

Complementarities between the funds

Policy objective (PO 1)

ERDF investments under PO 1 targeted at supporting science, research, and innovations, SMEs, the use of digitalization benefits and skills development for smart specialisation, industrial transformation and business. Regarding development of **skills**, Objective 1 will support vocational training of pupils (e.g. dual education, practical teaching at the workplace of the employer), implementation of study programmes for bachelor, master and doctorate university studies and providing motivational scholarships for talented domestic and foreign students RIS3 domains. Objective 4 will support general and vocational education held by employers outside of RIS3 areas, as well as conceptual measures aimed at building a coherent system of lifelong counselling, introduction of the institute of foreman examination and specialised secondary school leaving examination, providing smaller and small (professional) qualifications and micro-qualifications and development of sectoral educational centres and vocational education and training centres (VETC). ERDF investments in PO 4 will be complemented by the **ESF+** funding to address the needs of education, consulting services, communication, and also awareness-raising activities, etc.

The **JTF** interventions will be synergically promoting investments to boost the diversification, modernisation, and transformation of the economy, such as investments in research and innovation activities, transfer of advanced technologies, investments in digital transformation, digital innovation and digital interconnection, and promote productive investments in SMEs, including startups and micro-enterprises in order to promote the transition to a climate-neutral economy.

The EMFAF support will work synergistically in the areas of the diversification, the modernisation, the promotion of technology transfer and the overall digital transition of the aquaculture and fish processing SMEs.

Policy objective 2 (PO 2)

In addition to the **ERDF** funding, the **CF** could also be complementary to the funding under PO 2, in particular in waste management, water management, reducing the energy intensity of buildings, in remediation of environmental burdens, and adaptation to climate change as well as nature protection and promotion of biodiversity and revitalization of neglected and unused urban areas in settlements and sustainable mobility. However, an appropriate balance will be required between the ERDF and the CF investments in the environment and transport sectors.

In complementarity, the **JTF** will contribute to brownfield restoration, to investing in the circular economy and in clean technologies, in RES and in improving energy efficiency and energy poverty prevention, investments in sustainable local mobility, and in the decarbonisation of local transport systems.

Regarding support to **circular economy**²⁹, PO 2 will support activities aimed at supporting composting in households, technologies reducing production of waste from packages, building centres of reuse and activities aimed at products reuse (repairs, upcycling) and support increasing efficiency of existing systems of separated household waste collection and awareness of the public, consumers and stakeholders of the necessity and benefits of prevention of waste generation, separation and recycling as well as use of materials produced from recyclates. PO 1 will support research, development and innovations in circular economy in line with the RIS 3 SK strategy, activities in companies aimed at

²⁸ A more information on participation of social and economic partners in the preparation process of the Partnership Agreement of the SR for 2021-2027 is provided in the Annex 7 Partnership Principle.

²⁹ More information on Ensuring support for the transition to a circular economy see Annex 2 to the PA

closing material flows in the production in order to ensure efficient use of resources, extend the lifecycle of products, change business models, use renewable resources and materials, apply ecodesign, as well as develop and ensure skills and competences for green transformation and transition to circular economy.

Under PO 2, the **EMFAF** will also be complementarily used, in particular, to promote the energetic transition and the energy efficiency of the SK economic sectors of aquaculture and fish processing; to protect and restore the SR aquatic and biological resources; to promote and enhance the overall resilience of the aquaculture and fish processing as well as the adaptation of the sectors to the Climate Change; to promote the innovation the digitalisation and the green transition of the SK SMEs operating in the sectors of EMFAF interest. .

Policy objective 3 (PO 3)

ERDF funds for the construction of expressways, modernisation and construction of category I roads, support for regional rail transport, improvement of regional transport services, including infrastructure and the development of cyclo-transportation and its infrastructure as an associated investment to the implemented projects, will be complementary to the **CF** funding to cover the completion of TEN-T motorways and upgrading the TEN-T rail infrastructure, including junctions and water infrastructure.

Policy objective 4 (PO 4)

PO 4 will ensure complementarities between the **ESF+** and the **ERDF**, especially in promoting a better work-life balance, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education and vocational training systems, improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, vocational training, and lifelong learning services, promoting active inclusion, with a view to promote equal opportunities, active participation and better employability, the socio-economic integration of disadvantaged people and marginalised Roma communities, and ensuring equal access to healthcare. In a synergic manner, the **JTF** will be used to promote investment aimed at the creation of new jobs in the form of retraining, enhancing employee qualifications, job search assistance, and investing in setting up new businesses, business incubators and business consultancy, and also at investing in education and social inclusion within territories most affected by the impacts of the transition to a climate-neutral economy.

Policy objective 5 (PO 5)

Within **PO 5**, the **ERDF** resources will be used to complement **ESF+** funds, especially in building administrative and analytical-strategic capacities and the promotion of open government but also through the implementation of educational, communication, and awareness-raising activities to increase citizens' security, defending democracy, developing tourism and promoting cultural and natural heritage.

Financial instruments

Policy Objective 1 foresees the use of financial instruments (FIs) to strengthen the growth and competitiveness of SMEs. They should also focus on R&D, cooperation between enterprises and academic institutions and the modernisation of R&D infrastructure. Another area to be supported will be the development of urban infrastructure under the smart cities concept.

Under *Policy Objective 2*, FIs are foreseen to be used to improve the energy efficiency of public buildings and enterprises, as well as to promote renewable energy, smart energy systems and energy storage. They should also be used in the transition towards a circular economy with an emphasis on waste prevention and reuse.

Under *Policy Objective 3*, the use of FIs is foreseen primarily in the area of road infrastructure construction/reconstruction.

Policy Objective 4 foresees the use of FIs primarily to support social economy, including support for social enterprises, social services and social housing.

Policy Objective 5 foresees the use of FIs to support the improvement of management, services and infrastructure in the field of culture and sport, as well as regional and local infrastructure for physical activities.

Resources from the Just Transition Fund will in part be also implemented by means of FIs.

Ex ante assessment will confirm the areas of FIs support which will be then detailed in the Programme Slovakia.

The use of FIs will provide considerable flexibility and simplification compared to grant aid and will include the combination of FIs and grants in one operation. Slovak Investment Holding will carry out implementation of FIs.

In order to promote individual Cohesion policy objectives, through the FIs it will be imperative to ensure maximum flexibility, including the implementation of a combination of FIs and grants within a single operation.

FIs have the potential for a long-term effect on the growth of various market segments due to their motivation and multiplier effect. For this reason, it is important that the areas supported by grants do not overlap with the areas where

it is appropriate to use FIs. At the same time, it is desirable to minimise fragmentation when managing FIs at the national level.

Complementarities with national support instruments

The resources from different national instruments will also complementarily contribute to fulfilling the objectives of the individual priorities of the PA SR. The national support instruments currently in force have a limited validity, i.e., it cannot be stated they will be implemented throughout the entire 2021 – 2027 period. For instance, this covers the following complementary resources:

- PO 1 – subsidy schemes and programmes of the Ministry of the Economy of the SR - Act No. 71/2013 Coll. on granting subsidies within the competence of the Ministry of the Economy of the SR, Act No. 290/2016 Coll. on support of small and medium-sized enterprises, Act No. 57/2018 Coll. on regional investment aid, etc., as well as on the provision of subsidies within the competence of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR;
PO 2 – schemes of the Ministry of the Economy of the SR covering energy efficiency, environmental fund support, support under the State Housing Development Fund and subsidies within the competence of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the SR applicable to buildings, and environmental fund support; Subsidies to support cycling transport and cycling tourism, (Act No. 151/2019 Coll. on the support of cycling transport and cycling tourism development, permanent financial mechanism for the implementation of the National strategy for the development of cycling transport and cycling tourism, Act No. 300/2008 Coll. on the organisation and support of sports, Act No. 91/2010 Coll. on the support of tourism, and Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on the support to regional development;
- PO 4 - programmes implemented by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family or by labour offices (access to employment), subsidy within the remit of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, subsidies and programmes of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (subsidies covering development, social support to pupils, scientific activities, regional education), subsidy to support the development of social services, and in the field of the social and legal protection of children and social guardianship, subsidy for the acquisition of rental flats intended for social housing, subsidy to support social services development, and the like;
- PO 5 – Act No. 91/2010 Coll. on the support of tourism, The Sport Support Fund and contributions and subsidies to support sport within the meaning of Act No. 440/2015 Coll., the programme “Let us renovate our house” of the Ministry of Culture of the SR, the Arts Support Fund. The subsidies within the remit of the MIRDI of the SR within the meaning of Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on the support for regional development, as amended; subsidies to support cycling transport and cycling tourism, (Act No. 151/2019 Coll. on the support of cycling transport and cycling tourism development, permanent financial mechanism for the implementation of the National strategy for the development of cycling transport and cycling tourism, Act No. 300/2008 Coll. on the organisation and support of sports, Act No. 91/2010 Coll. on the support of tourism, and Act No. 539/2008 Coll. on the support to regional development

2.3. Complementarities and synergies between the funds covered by the Partnership Agreement, the AMIF, the ISF, the BMVI, and other Union instruments – point (b)(iii) of Article 11(1)

At the programme level, the MIRDI, in cooperation with the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (GO SR), is preparing a mechanism for coordination and achieving synergy effects between EU Cohesion Policy funds and other instruments of support from the EU and the SR. The GO SR will be an integral part of the mechanism as the National implementation and coordination authority (NICA), together with expert units of the MIRDI. The aim of the mechanism will be the assessment of synergy effects and removal of duplicities in funding of operations in reforms and investment projects of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)³⁰ and other intervention frameworks, in particular from EU funds. The GO SR and the MIRDI compare the basic structure of strategic documents and define synergies, complementarities and potential duplicities among measures in the RRP and planned measures in the Partnership Agreement /Programme Slovakia. The comparison is made in an easy-to-read table format for five thematic areas of public policies: green economy; education, science, research and innovations; health; effective public administration including digitalisation. The comparison in the table identifies basic synergies and complementarities at the level of components and priority areas in individual instruments and also defines framework focus of measures in order to prevent possible duplicities in financing at the strategic level.

Synergies and complementarities will be assessed prior to notifications of calls financed from the Programme Slovakia and implementation instrument RRP, whereby it will be necessary to specify synergy effects for the call

³⁰ <https://www.mfsr.sk/sk/verejnost/plan-obnovy-odolnosti/>

itself/implementation instrument RRP. IB/RRP administrators will be obliged to submit each call prior to its notification to the synergies coordinator and the coordinators will prepare the common opinion. The assessment will be based on comparison matrix for measures of ESIF and RRP that will be continuously updated. The joint opinion will be sent to relevant implementation authorities of the PA and RRP. Each call will also contain reference to the no significant harm principle and calls will contain reference to Art.17 of Regulation 2019/2088 with a guidance.

The time aspect of synergies and complementarities will be safeguarded by the obligation of the IB to submit an indicative plan of calls that will contain a list of planned and notified calls.

The coordination mechanism for synergies is composed of an inter-ministerial coordination platform which will include 5 working groups - components of the RRP and vice versa 5 policy objectives of cohesion policy. These working groups, both within individual ministries and at inter-ministerial level, will ensure the definition and clarification of the precise demarcation lines between the EU funds, the RRF and other financial instruments.

Very important part of the platform is the Steering Committee for Synergies and Complementarities. Steering Committee as the principal high-level coordination mechanism, will be mainly responsible for:

- optimising the mechanisms for coordinating synergies and complementarities between the ESIF, the RRF and other EU support instruments,
- examination of calls or calls for proposals of the IB/RRP administrators prior to their publication for synergies and complementarities and identification of possible duplications,
- drawing up a joint opinion for IB/RRP administrators on synergies and complementarities for each call or call for proposals,
- requesting indicative timetable for calls for the relevant year/semester from the IB/RRP administrators.

Steering Committee will be composed of representatives of MIRDI as a coordinator of synergies in PA and NICA as a coordinator of synergies in RRP. Representatives of other financial instruments, etc. will be part of the SC on the ad hoc basis.

In the framework of the ITMS for the new programming period 2021-2027, a special IT component is planned to be created for the RRP, EU funds 2021-2027 under the CPR, as well as the Common Agriculture Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP). This common IT system will ensure electronic control of shared information on synergies as well as possible demarcation lines between these funds.

The mechanism for application of synergies and complementarities will also be used for projects the SR will implement in other EU programmes, in particular Horizon Europe, Connecting Europe Facility – CEF, LIFE and InvestEU that equally support significant investments in various fields that will be complementary to interventions of the Recovery Plan as well as of the Partnership Agreement. A more detailed mechanism for implementation of synergies and complementarities as well as the table for the Structure of comparison of measures for synergies for the Recovery and Resilience Plan and EU Funds form an Annex 5 to the PA.

In Policy objective 1 there is complementarity expected with the following instrument, programme or fund:

The Recovery and Resilience Plan of the SR, in component 9, projects support by means of “Matching” grants for public institutions to private sector sources in research cooperation, support to transformation and innovation consortia, support to improvement of access to European data and research infrastructure, support to projects engaged in the European Research Area (ERA), big projects for excellent researchers; investments to companies with innovative potential with the use of financial instruments, voucher support for SMEs, innovations for digitalization and decarbonisation and “Early stage” grants.

In component 10, there is synergy expected in the field of implementation of systemic changes in internationalisation of universities or research institutions, support to increasing international exchange of students and research employees as well as support for programmes for target groups of foreign students, highly qualified employees and their family members.

Component 11 expects synergies with EU funds in the support for infrastructure of hospitals and emergency medical services, acquiring top equipment for hospitals and emergency medical services, centralisation of management and digitalization of services, including central ERP system and navigation system for treatment of fibrillation and support to opening doctor’s offices in areas with their shortage. In component 14 and 16, there is support expected for introducing principles of better regulation by means of reducing administrative and financial burden in doing business, support to developing public administration information system for keeping records of foreign nationals; introduction and implementation of goAML instrument.

In component 17 there were synergies identified in building eGovernment solutions of priority life situations, support to better services for citizens and entrepreneurs, support to digital transformation of public administration services,

support to security audits, detection and solution of incidents, support to technical and technological equipment for critical infrastructure and support to services focused on digital skills of seniors. Further, it is in the field of supporting high performance computing, blockchain technologies, quantum infrastructure and artificial intelligence instruments, build-up European centres of digital information and Centres of digital information to support SMEs; support to hackathons and development of top digital technologies as well as engagement in cross-border projects.

Horizon Europe in the field of expanding research and innovation capacities, expanding digitalization and enhancing the growth and competitiveness of SMEs, namely, by means of increasing the innovation potential of SMEs using ICT and enhancing digital skills.

The coordinating mechanism expects use of ESI Funds resources in order to ensure active participation of Slovak entities (public and private) in research and innovation missions of the Horizon Europe programme. Its goal is to increase the success rate of Slovak applicants in this programme and support participation of Slovak entities in the European Research Area.

It is also planned to use ESI Funds for the Seal of Excellence instrument, especially to fund projects of SMEs.

Erasmus+ for education and training for smart specialization, industrial transformation and entrepreneurship.

Digital Europe in order to use and enhance capacities in research, development and application of high-performance computing and quantum technologies, use of artificial intelligence in the public administration, business and research and development institutions.

Application of technologies such as artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, strengthening of the cyber security and other technologies in Slovakia will be supported by European centres of digital innovations. They are separate organisations or coordinated clusters of organisations (consortia) with additional professional skills and non-profit targets, supporting, in particular, small and medium enterprises or public sector in the field of digital transformation. They will help companies become more competitive in their trading or production processes or services using digital technologies. Funding of such centres will be provided from the Digital Europe programme.

Enhancing digital and entrepreneurial skills using ESI Funds resources also counts with the support to active participation of Slovak entities in the Digital Europe programme.

Connecting Europe Facility aims to support financing investments in digital connectivity infrastructures.

Single Market Agenda (including COSME) to strengthen SMEs growth and competitiveness.

Internal Security Fund in areas relevant to security of information systems, ICT and cyber-crime.

European Space Programme supporting the most promising technologies that are also applicable in business.

In Policy objective 2 there is complementarity expected with the following instrument, programmes or fund:

Recovery and Resilience Plan of the SR, in component 1, assumes investments to the build-up of new electricity sources from RES, modernization of existing RES sources and support for increasing the flexibility of the electricity grid, especially through the support of electricity storage facilities.

In component 2, it is support to comprehensive renovation of buildings that are private family houses and historical and listed protected public buildings.

In component 3, there will be synergic support provided to public infrastructure of alternative drive systems aimed at charging stations for electric vehicles and hydrogen filling stations (not purchases of vehicles) and tariff integration. Further, it is investments into the build-up or modernisation of tram or trolleybus lines and purchases of public transport rail vehicles (trams) and support to cycling infrastructure.

In component 4, there will be synergic and complementary support provided to systemic measures (low-emission production processes) in industrial companies and compensation of a part of investment costs necessary for implementation of measures bringing reduction of greenhouse gases in companies that offer the lowest price for reducing emissions.

In component 5, support will aim at renaturation of water courses and wetlands, purchase of land plots in protected areas (extension of non-intervention zones) and support to pilot projects of soft tourism focused on transformation of Muránska Planina National Park and Poloniny National Park.

Expenditures for the purchase of land in protected areas for the purpose of implementing their protection will not be eligible under the PA SR / Programme Slovakia until the date of completion of the implementation of the RRP of the SR, i. e. by the end of 2026, or by the date on which the resources allocated for the purchase of land in protected areas within the RRP were spent, whichever occurs earlier. During that period, only expenditures on the purchase of land

related to buildings and their surroundings will be eligible for funding from EU funds under the PA SR within the implementation of measures resulting from protected area care programmes.

From EU funds under the PA SR / Programme Slovakia projects for the revitalisation of streams in the river basins of Hornád, Ipel', Nitra, Slaná and Malý Dunaj will be implemented and within the RRP of the SR projects for revitalisation of streams in river basins Bodrog, Dunaj, Hron, Morava and Váh will be funded.

In component 15 and 16, support will aim at reconstructions of existing court premises and build-up/acquisition of buildings for new courts in largest cities of the country and modernisation and build-up of the infrastructure of Firefighting and Rescue System as well as build-up of the network of Integrated Safety Centres (ISC).

Horizon Europe in the field of deploying renewable energy sources and green transport.

LIFE for nature protection, biodiversity conservation, transition to a circular economy, adaptation to the climate change and sustainable promotion of renewable energy sources. Synergically use with EMFAF resources.

Digital Europe in high-performance computing for the expansion of renewable energy sources.

Erasmus+ in the field of education and training development to promote renewable energy sources, climate change and environmental engineering.

rescEU (EU mechanism for civil emergency) to strengthen intervention capacities of emergency units and support measures necessary for early and effective intervention.

Connecting Europe Facility is used to support smart grid projects with a cross-border dimension, listed as projects of common interest (PCI).

Internal Security Fund in areas relevant to environmental crime.

Modernisation Fund - in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency and electricity generation from RES.

In Policy objective 3 there is complementarity expected with the following instrument, programmes or fund:

Recovery and Resilience Plan of the SR, in component 3, will support dispatching, electrification of tracks and modernisation of railway tracks (determined operations) in TEN-T network and support purchases of intermodal transport units and loading equipment with engagement of private capital. Further, support will aim at renovation of public transport rail vehicles (train sets and locomotives).

Horizon Europe for sustainable and smart mobility.

Connecting Europe Facility in the field of financing transport infrastructure and low-carbon mobility (e.g. modernization of railway corridors). Goals in the field of modernizing and build-up of inland waterway transport infrastructure will also be carried out using this tool.

In Policy objective 4 there is complementarity expected with the following instrument, programme or fund:

The field of education is connected with the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic in terms of the principles on which they are based, in terms of content, including goals and at the same time in terms of time.

Component 6 will support activities to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education at all levels, focus on the individual needs of the child with an emphasis on the inclusion of children growing up in generational poverty, but also ensure sufficient capacity of kindergartens and primary schools and debarrierisation of secondary schools. Component 7 aims to provide students with an education adapted to the needs of today's society aimed at increasing literacy, critical thinking and digital skills and supporting teachers in improving their skills in response to new demands and trends in education, ensuring a gradual digital transformation and a better link between education and the labor market.

Within the ESIF, when setting up calls and projects, the implemented reforms or their parts, methodologies and manuals created within the RRP will be used (eg. for debarrierization), other phases of the solution of the cross-cutting theme (inclusion, quality) will be supported. ESIF will support complementary the debarrierisation of all school levels and school facilities other than secondary schools. The technical equipment for schools in the context of the digital transformation of education will be supported from RRP and the positions of digital coordinators from ESIF which will significantly increase the efficiency of the investment.

Component 12 will provide comprehensive support to the build-up of the infrastructure for mental health care (including technical equipment) and support the build-up of a network of day centres, support the build-up of detention

facilities, support development of diagnostics and treatment procedures and support education of expert capacities, support the National mental health line. In component 13, support will be provided to the build-up of new capacities and increase of existing capacities in facilities of community type, build-up of new out-patient facilities, support to development of services at the community level and deinstitutionalisation, build-up of new capacities of in-patient care, extension of the network of home care nursing and build-up of new low-threshold walled hospices and establishment of new mobile hospices.

Erasmus+ on investment in education and training, including inclusion and lifelong learning.

EU4Health to improve the quality and accessibility of health care.

Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in the field of enhancing social and economic integration of third-country nationals.

Internal Security Fund in the field of prevention and eradication of drug crime as well as prevention and battling radicalization.

*In **Policy objective 5** there is complementarity expected with the following instrument, programmes or funds:*

Recovery and Resilience Plan of the SR, in component 16 will support strategic, analytical and investment activity of the coordination authority for the Recovery and Resilience Plan and of local government authorities as part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan implementation.

Horizon Europe for increasing the security of inhabitants and visitors to municipalities, related to the protection of health, life and assets of citizens and crime prevention.

Creative Europe in the field of cultural heritage development.

Erasmus+ on the support to development of lagging regions through education and training.

Internal Security Fund in the field of ensuring security for citizens.

*For the **Just Transition Fund** there is complementarity expected with the following programmes or funds:*

Modernisation Fund mainly in addressing the socio-economic and employment impacts of the modernisation of energy systems and improvement of energy efficiency.

Recovery and Resilience Plan of the SR within component 1 renewable energy sources and energy infrastructure, component 2 building renovation, component 4 decarbonisation of industry, component 7 education for the 21st century and component 13 accessible and high-quality long-term social and health care.

Synergies and complementarity with other relevant EU programmes as well as other pillars of the Just Transition Mechanism is defined in the Territorial Just Transition Plan.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (**EAFRD**) - synergies and complementarities with the interventions **within** the 2021-2023 transition period and subsequently within the CAP Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 – with respect to **PO 1**, especially in areas covering knowledge transfer, consultancy, innovation support, including digital transformation, supporting entrepreneurship, investing in the bio-economy and in specific agricultural sectors, and when it comes to SMEs, the EAFRD will focus on businesses and in digitalization in agricultural primary production, processing agricultural products and forestry. With respect to **PO 2**, there will be the circular economy and utilization of renewable energy sources (biogas stations) synergies, adaptation and improvement of the resistance of agriculture and forestry to climate change, increasing the land's water retention capacity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, increasing carbon sequestration and nature protection, risk management in agriculture, nature conservation. The EAFRD will contribute to **PO 1** by promoting training for ICT in agriculture, food processing and forestry. The EAFRD will contribute to **PO 4** by promoting the business activity of young farmers who are a risk group when it comes to rural depopulation. Social enterprises operating in primary agricultural production will also be able to receive support. Regarding **PO 5**, there will be synergies with the EAFRD in order to improve the quality of life in rural areas, such as development of municipalities, culture, sport, tourism, etc.. In complementarity, the implementation of the LEADER approach will contribute to **PO 1- 5** and within the EAFRD framework, it will especially focus on encouraging the employment of rural population by promoting their business activity (agricultural and non-agricultural activities), increasing the productivity of companies operating in agriculture and forestry, improving the quality of life in rural areas (development of municipalities, culture, sport, tourism).

3. Contribution to the budgetary guarantee under InvestEU with justification ³¹ - does not apply

Reference: point (g) of Article 11(1) and Article 14

Table 3.1: Contribution to InvestEU (breakdown by year)

Contribution from		Contribution to	Breakdown by year							
Fund	Category of region	InvestEU window(s)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF	More developed									
	Transition									
	Less developed									
ESF+	More developed									
	Transition									
	Less developed									
Cohesion Fund	N/A									
EMFAF	N/A									

Table 3. 2: Contribution to InvestEU* (summary)

	Category of region*	Window 1 Sustainable Infrastructure (a)	Window 2 Research, Innovation and Digitisation (b)	Window 3 SME (c)	Window 4 Social Investment and Skills (d)	Total (f)=(a)+(b)+(c)+(d)
ERDF	More developed					
	Less developed					
	Transition					
ESF+	More developed					
	Less developed					
	Transition					
Cohesion Fund						
EMFAF						
Total						

Text field [3 500] (justification taking into account how those amounts contribute to the achievement of policy objectives selected in the Partnership Agreement in line with Art. 10(1) of the InvestEU Regulation)

³¹ Contributions shall not affect the annual breakdown of financial appropriations at the MFF level for a Member State.

4. Transfers³²

SR requests a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transfer between categories of region
	<input type="checkbox"/> transfer to instruments under direct or indirect management
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transfer between ERDF, ESF+, Cohesion Fund or to another Fund or Funds
	<input type="checkbox"/> transfer of ERDF and ESF+ resources as complementary support to the JTF
	<input type="checkbox"/> transfers from European territorial cooperation to Investment for jobs and growth

4.1. Transfer between categories of region

Reference: point (e) of Article 11(1) and Article 111;

Table 4.1.1: Transfers between categories of region (breakdown by year)

Transfer from	Transfer to	Breakdown by year)							
Category of region	Category of region	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
Less developed	More developed	65 248 651	67 990 387	70 830 998	74 391 119	78 158 950	82 130 220	86 334 739	525 085 064

³² Transfers shall not affect the annual breakdown of financial appropriations at the MFF level for a Member State.

Table 4.1.2: Transfer between categories of region (summary)

Category of region	Allocation by category of region	Transfer to:	Transfer amount	Share of the initial allocation transferred	Allocation by category of region after the transfer*
Less developed	10 501 701 280	More developed	525 085 064	5,00 %	9 976 616 216
More developed	20 028 126		0	0	545 113 190

* Taking into account transfers between ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund the final net allocation of More developed region is 490 601 870 EUR.

Following a low initial allocation (EUR 20.03 million) that is significantly lower compared to the previous programming period, 5% of resources are expected to be transferred from less developed regions to the Bratislava Region (BR).

The transferred resources are needed to address structural problems of BR, including environmental, especially in relation to climate change. This include the support of central institutions and services, from which also other Slovak regions would benefit. At the same time, these additional funds are aimed to mitigate intra-regional disparities of BR that are in particular negatively affecting peripheral predominantly rural districts.

The territory of the BR is not homogeneous. The national capital, Bratislava, faces significant demographic and urban challenges, especially in the field of transport, environment and social care. The 3 predominantly rural districts (covering more than 80% of the territory and 34% of the BR's population) struggle with a similar level of development challenges as their neighbouring districts in less developed regions.

The additional allocation will be used primarily under Objectives 1 and 2 of cohesion policy. Investments in these areas will enable the Slovak Republic to meet its commitments in the area of achieving carbon neutrality, as well as to use the full potential of BR as a centre of research and innovation.

Under Objective 1 it will contain the support of the major R&I institutions: Slovak Technical University, Slovak Academy of Sciences and Comenius University, including promotion of academia-business R&I collaboration, (clusters), healthcare research and development of skills for RIS3 domains. These institutions represent almost ½ of all Slovak research capacities and operate nationwide so these interventions will have a clear impact on R&I activities also in other regions of Slovakia. The whole territory of BR as well as other LDRs of Slovakia will benefit from the support for digitalization of public services and smart cities activities. Continuous support to activities of the National Business Centre will contribute to respond to the needs of SMEs across Slovakia.

Under Objective 2 the focus will be on environmental and climate change challenges. The BR experiences the highest demographic growth among the regions in Slovakia (3 times of the Slovak average) with indicated 8% growth by the end of 2027. This puts extensive stress on natural environment, including protected landscapes (e.g. Žitný ostrov, which is the largest drinking water reservoir in Central Europe). The growing urbanization phenomenon in Bratislava satellites emphasizes the negative consequences of climate change, e.g. overheating of surfaces, droughts and dust creation, intensive rain damage and flooding. The production of municipal waste per capita in BR is the second highest while the proportion of recycled waste is the second lowest in the SR. BR also fails to meet national targets and commitments in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy. Activities aimed at waste management, increasing energy efficiency of buildings and introduction of renewable energy sources within central heat supply will specifically target city districts and municipalities outside the capital city. Under this objective also parts of Integrated Transport System of the BR located in “rural” districts will be supported, along with access cycle-routes.

Under Objective 3 the project of road bypass of Pezinok and Modra will be supported to resolve the major traffic congestions in the Pezinok district and to increase accessibility of BR from Trnava region.

Under Objective 4 it is planned to cover main ESF+ priorities, in particular support for inclusion of marginalised Roma communities, activities addressing increase of skills, active inclusion and accessible services, as well as food deprivation and social innovation. The measures will concentrate on rural areas of BR (3 districts: Malacky, Pezinok, Senec).

Small portion of funds is also planned under Objective 5 to improve the quality of life mostly in rural areas of BR.

4.2. Transfers to instruments under direct or indirect management

– does not apply

Reference: Article 26(1)

4.3. Transfers between ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund or to another Fund or Funds

Reference: Article 26(1)

Table 4.3.1: Transfers between ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund and to other Fund or Funds (breakdown by year)

Transfers from		Transfers to		Breakdown by year							
Fund	Category of region	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF	More developed	Cohesion Fund		5 241 686	5 457 371	5 680 762	5 959 788	6 254 856	6 565 679	6 894 456	42 054 598
	Less developed			95 643 431	99 662 349	103 826 111	109 045 274	114 567 647	120 387 693	126 547 234	769 679 739
ESF+	More developed			1 552 556	1 616 440	1 682 614	1 765 215	1 852 657	1 944 803	2 042 437	12 456 722
	Less developed			28 329 006	29 519 387	30 752 784	32 297 852	33 934 358	35 659 724	37 488 772	227 981 883

Table 4.3.2: Transfers between ERDF, ESF+ and Cohesion Fund or to another Fund or Funds (summary)*

Transfer to Transfer from		ERDF		ESF+		Cohesion Fund	EMFAF	AMIF	ISF	BMVI	Total
		More developed	Less developed	More developed	Less developed						
ERDF	More developed			0	0	42 054 598	0	0	0	0	42 054 598
	Less developed			0	0	769 679 739	0	0	0	0	769 679 739
ESF+	More developed	0	0			12 456 722	0	0	0	0	12 456 722
	Less developed	0	0			227 981 883	0	0	0	0	227 981 883
Cohesion Fund	N/A	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
EMFAF	N/A	0	0	0	0	0					0
Total		0	0	0	0	1 052 172 942	0	0	0	0	1 052 172 942

* Transfer to other programmes. Transfers between ERDF and ESF+ can only be done within the same category of region.

The new MFF assumes a significant reduction in the overall allocation for the Cohesion Fund (CF) at EU level. The reduction of the CF allocation for the SR is even more pronounced (EUR 1.613 m in 2021 - 27 compared to EUR 4.168 min 2014 – 20 represents a 61% decrease).

Given the environmental and transport needs identified by the national strategies and commitments, the CF allocation for the SR is insufficient. Therefore in order to address commitments and the requirements of the EU environmental and transport legislation the **SR envisages to transfer 10% of the funds from the ERDF and 10% from the ESF+ to the CF**. The CF resources after the transfers will be equally divided between transport infrastructure and environment measures. The total CF resources after the transfer will still reach only 63.8% of the 2014 – 20 CF allocation, while ERDF and ESF + resources will remain at the 2014 – 20 level even after transfers. When deciding on the transfer from ESF +, a significant increase in resources provided to this area within 2014 - 20 was also taken into account. *The amount of EUR 391 m was reallocated to ESF as part of Covid-19 measures (53% of all transfers), additional funds from REACT-EU totalling EUR 509 m were also directed to ESF (65% of the overall allocation) together with EUR 24 m allocated to FEAD*. The volume of ESF + resources at the 2014 -20 level will not have a negative impact on other specific objectives of ESF +, especially education and social inclusion (particularly the MRC), which will also be significantly supported by the RRP and will be used in a period with lower level of unemployment as in 2014-20.

The transferred funds will be used to increase the intensity of support solely within less developed regions (LDR). The CF investments will cover 5 specific objectives of PO 2. Measures aimed to reduce energy intensity in buildings (SO 2.1) will be placed predominantly in LDR (more than 65% in residential buildings and more than 90% in public buildings). In the area of climate change adaptation (SO 2.4) it concerns water retention measures for adaptation to climate change in settlements and countryside and/or flood protection that will be focusing primarily (96% of investments) on LDR. As regards sustainable water management (SO 2.5) the investments will target the treatment of municipal waste water in agglomerations above 2, 000 population equivalent (PE) where LDR will receive 97.9% of resources. Within the nature, biodiversity and landscape protection, including protection of the Natura 2000 network (SO 2.7), 95% of investments will be located in LDR. Under SO 2.8 (sustainable mobility in Bratislava Region) 100% of the investments of the CF will be allocated in MDR.

The CF investments in the transport sector (PO 3) will be in line with in the national strategy “Strategic Plan for the Development of Transport of the Slovak Republic to 2030” adopted in 2017. In order to ensure the continuous preparation and implementation of transport projects based on real transport needs and accurate analytical data, an analytical methodology for the selection of investment priorities has been prepared. Consequently the investments priorities for road and railway infrastructure were prepared taking into account the fulfilment of the national commitments in the area of CORE TEN-T development. The investments will concentrate in Žilina, Prešov and Banská Bystrica regions. The share of projects planned in the Bratislava region represent 4,9%.

According to several studies and evaluations, the implementation of large infrastructure projects significantly contributes to job creation, support for economic growth and increase the competitiveness of regions. Investments in environmental infrastructure will contribute to the development of regions (also to the fulfilment of ERDF objectives) and will secondarily create conditions for the creation of new enterprises, jobs and the improvement of living conditions of the population (which will also **contribute to the fulfilment of ESF + objectives**). The increase in CF resources will enable to better finance activities which **will improve the quality of the environment and contribute to the green transformation of the SR**.

4.4. Transfer of ERDF and ESF+ resources as complementary support to the JTF, with justification

– does not apply

Reference: Article 27

4.5. Transfers from European territorial cooperation goal to Investment for jobs and growth goal

– does not apply

Reference: Article 111(3)

5. The form of Union contribution for technical assistance

Reference: point (f) of Article 11(1)

The choice of the form of the Union contribution to technical assistance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical assistance pursuant to Article 36(4)*
	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical assistance pursuant to Article 36(5)**

* If chosen table 8.1 of section 8 is to be filled in.

** If chosen table 8.2 of section 8 is to be filled in.

The basic purpose of the support from the technical assistance (TA) in 2021 - 2027 programming period is to increase the quality and efficiency of management and implementation. The EU contribution to the TA will be implemented with the emphasis on simplification of processes and effectiveness of supported activities.

Attention will be paid to enhancing the quality of administrative capacities (AC) which ensuring tasks covering ESIF management, control, and audit. The EC and the SR will allocate specific financial support to social and economic partners and institutions that ensure the ESIF implementation across the SR regions (e.g., NGOs, territorial self-government with respect to the coordination of the activities of Partnership Councils (ITI), the activities of the regional centres of the MIRDI SR, which will keep providing support to applicants and beneficiaries).

Eligible activities of TA will aim at supporting transparent and motivational system of evaluation and remuneration of AC, by means of refunding incomes (e.g. salaries, bonuses, social and health insurance contributions of employers, etc.). Providing support to the human resources development is a prerequisite for improving the ESIF implementation efficiency. The SR will continue applying the central education system similarly to the 2014 – 2020 programming period. The SR will ensure the operation of the Education Central Plan information system and adapt the education content to the needs of the 2021-2027 programming period and enhance the quality and scope of the learning activities provided.

Funding will be provided for activities focusing on information dissemination to the public and to specific target groups on the possibilities of obtaining support from the EU budget and on the results achieved. The aim is to streamline the communication strategy so that the support provided under the ESIF is transparent and available to all target groups. The use of a wide range of tools and ways of communication is under consideration. For example, funding will be provided to run information campaigns promoting the OP, to disseminate information on the calls under preparation, workshops, and conferences and on website administration. Activities in this area will be based on knowing real-life information needs and on the selection of the most efficient communication tools.

To ensure electronic services in implementation processes and information exchange among all the actors, it is imperative to support the operation and further development of the existing information systems in the ESIF management, control, and audit including essential innovations and integrations with other relevant information systems and registers. The aim of the information systems development is especially their interconnection with the relevant existing data sources to simplify user requirements while reducing time requirements.

Special attention will be paid to the mechanism of evaluating the achievements made and to the objectives of the PA SR including evaluation tools and models, supporting analytical and evaluation documents. The activities also include financing the necessary professional outsourced services and special education and training, which cannot be provided under general education.

Likewise, there will also be adequate material and technical equipment provided to eligible beneficiaries as well as working groups to facilitate their activities and of the Monitoring Committees and also the financing of business meetings, including domestic and foreign business trips of AC, etc.

6. Thematic concentration

6.1

Reference: Article 4(3) ERDF/CF Regulation

SK decides to	<input type="checkbox"/> comply with thematic concentration at national level
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> comply with thematic concentration at category of region level
	<input type="checkbox"/> take into account Cohesion Fund resources for the purpose of thematic concentration

6.2

Reference: point (c) of Article 11(1) CPR and Article 7 ESF+ Regulation

SK complies with thematic concentration requirements	33,6 % social inclusion Programmed under specific objectives (h) – (l) of Article 4 ESF+ Regulation	Planned ESF+ programmes Programme Slovakia
	3 % support to the most deprived Programmed under specific objectives (m), and in duly justified cases (l) of Article 4 ESF+ Regulation	Planned ESF+ programmes Programme Slovakia
	12,5 % support to youth employment Programmed under specific objectives (a), (f) and (l) of Article 4 ESF+ Regulation	Planned ESF+ programmes Programme Slovakia
	14 % support to tackling child poverty Programmed under specific objectives (f), (h) – (l) of Article 4 ESF+ Regulation	Planned ESF+ programmes Programme Slovakia*
	0,67 % capacity building social partners and NGO's Programmed under all specific objectives except (m) of Article 4 ESF+ Regulation	Planned ESF+ programmes Programme Slovakia*

* activities to support the given areas will be supported within the Programme Slovakia, but without the mandatory minimum allocation

7. Preliminary financial allocation from each of the funds covered by the Partnership Agreement by policy objective, JTF specific objective and technical assistance, at national and where appropriate regional level*

Reference: point (c) of Article 11(1)

Table 7. 1: Preliminary financial allocation from ERDF, Cohesion Fund, JTF, ESF+, EMFAF by policy objective, JTF specific objective and technical assistance *

Policy objectives, JTF specific objective or technical assistance	ERDF			Cohesion Fund allocation at national level	JTF***			ESF+			EMFAF allocation at national level	Total
	Allocation at national level	Category of region**	Allocation by category of region		Allocation at national level	Article 3 JTF resources	Article 4 JTF resources	Allocation at national level	Category of regions**	Allocation by category of region		
Policy objective 1	1 990 150 000	More developed	135 588 972						More developed			1 990 150 000
		Less developed	1 854 561 028						Less developed			
Policy objective 2	2 610 260 000	More developed	193 698 531	1 299 265 241					More developed		14 311 903	3 923 837 144
		Less developed	2 416 561 469						Less developed			
Policy objective 3	889 315 000	More developed	19 076 414	1 299 265 241					More developed			2 188 580 241
		Less developed	870 238 586						Less developed			
Policy objective 4	857 400 000	More developed	21 927 736				2 077 389 538		More developed	112 110 487		2 934 789 538
		Less developed	835 472 264						Less developed	1 965 279 051		
Policy objective 5	702 787 715	More developed	8 199 730						More developed		0	702 787 715
		Less developed	694 587 985						Less developed			
JTF specific objective					440 658 242	192 952 648	247 705 594					440 658 242

Technical assistance pursuant to Article 36(4)	255 696 315	More developed	0	66 628 986	18 360 759	8 039 693	10 321 066	86 557 896	More developed	0	913 525	428 157 481
		Less developed	255 696 315						Less developed	86 557 896		
Technical assistance pursuant to Article 37	0	More developed	0	0	0	0	0	0	More developed	0	0	0
		Less developed	0						Less developed	0		
Total	7 305 609 030	More developed	378 491 383	2 665 159 468	459 019 001	200 992 341	258 026 660	2 163 947 435	More developed	112 110 487	15 225 428	12 608 960 361
		Less developed	6 927 117 647						Less developed	1 943 845 529		
Article 7 JTF resources related to Article 3 JTF resources						0						0
Article 7 JTF resources related to Article 4 JTF resources							0		total			0
Total	7 305 609 030		7 305 609 030	2 665 159 468	459 019 001	200 992 341	258 026 660	2 163 947 434		2 163 947 434	15 225 428	12 608 960 361

* The amount should include the flexibility amounts in accordance with Article 18 that have been preliminary allocated. The actual allocation of the flexibility amounts will only be confirmed at the mid-term review.

** The preliminary allocation at regional level should be indicated where appropriate, pursuant to point (c) of Article 11(1)..

*** JTF amounts after the envisaged complementary support from the ERDF and ESF+.

For the purposes of effective distribution of available ERDF, CF and ESF + funds among the priorities within the 5 objectives of Cohesion policy, MIRD I in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance have created objective methodologies, based on which they scored the importance of individual investments (so-called prioritization). The proposed prioritization methodologies evaluate individual proposed priorities in the PA SR based on several criteria (i.e. EC priorities in accordance with Annex D and Specific Recommendations of the Council for the SR, priorities of the National Reform Program 2020, local government priorities, the result of the Analytical hierarchical process, measures necessary in terms of impending infringement, absorption capacity and implementation capacity, experience, strategic goals of the EU and COVID19 and the ability to absorb). To objectively link these methodologies, the points were recalculated proportionally to the same base of 17 points.

At the same time, the prioritization methodologies both have a 50% weight on the final methodology, through which the requirements amounted to EUR 30 billion were adapted to the possibilities of the national envelope of ERDF, CF and ESF + funds (taking into account legislative constraints such as thematic concentration, meeting the coefficients for climate change objectives, allocation for sustainable urban development, distribution of CF resources between Objective 2 and Objective 3 priorities, etc.). At the same time, the expected distribution of allocations of other instruments, such as RRF, React-EU, JTF, was taken into account, as well as applied reallocations within Covid measures.

The total allocations for PO 1 and PO 2 were set slightly above the mandatory limit in terms of thematic concentration of the ERDF, in order to better optimize the needs of the other objectives.

Following the application of the mentioned methodology, as well as the consideration of several principles and decisions (transfers, method of application of the thematic concentration, etc.), the distribution of the allocation is as follows:

For the ERDF, a thematic concentration was chosen at the regional level, which means compliance with different limits for the category of less developed regions and the category of more developed regions (in the case of the Slovak Republic, the Bratislava Region). At the level of the Slovak Republic, a total of EUR 7,050m, of which EUR 6,671m for Less developed regions and EUR 378m for More developed region:

Within Less developed Regions (all regions except the Bratislava Region):

- PO 1 in the amount of EUR 1,855m (27.80%),
- PO 2 in the amount of EUR 2,417m (36.22%),
- PO 3-5 in the amount of EUR 2,396m (35.98%).

Within the Bratislava Region as a More developed Region:

- PO 1 in the amount of EUR 136m (35.82%),
- PO 2 in the amount of EUR 194m (51.18%),
- PO 3-5 in the amount of EUR 49m (13.00%).

In the SR, a total amount allocated from ESF+ resources is EUR 2,077m. In accordance with the rules of thematic concentration, ESF + resources are divided as follows:

- EUR 698m (33.62%) for Social Inclusion,
- EUR 260m (12.5%) for Youth Employment,
- EUR 62m (3%) for people affected by Food and Material Deprivation,
- EUR 62m (3%) for Social Innovation and Experiments.

For the CF, the total allocation is EUR 2,598m distributed evenly between PO 2 and PO 3 (50:50)

Total allocation of funds, the ERDF, the CF and the ESF +:

PO 1: EUR 1,990m,

PO2: EUR 3,910m,

PO3: EUR 2,189m,

PO4: EUR 2,935m,

PO5: EUR 703m.

The expected fulfillment of the climate targets is monitored by means of a formula, with each proposed measure being assigned a coefficient in accordance with Annex I to the CPR. The specific contribution to the fulfillment of climate goals will be monitored at the level of the Programme Slovakia.

8. List of planned programmes under the funds covered by the Partnership agreement with the respective preliminary financial allocations by fund and the corresponding national contribution by category of region

Reference: point (h) of Article 11(1) of the and Article 110

Table 8.1: List of planned programmes¹ with preliminary financial allocations *

Title	Fund	Category of region	Union contribution	National contribution**	Total
Programme Slovakia	ERDF	More developed	378 491 383	567 737 075	946 228 458
		Less developed	6 927 117 647	1 222 432 526	8 149 550 173
	CF		2 665 159 468	470 322 260	3 135 481 728
	ESF+	More developed	112 110 487	168 165 731	280 276 218
		Less developed	2 051 836 947	362 088 873	2 413 925 820
	JTF allocation (Article 3 JTF Regulation)	Less developed	200 992 341	35 469 237	236 461 578
	JTF allocation (Article 4 JTF Regulation)	Less developed	258 026 660	45 534 117	303 560 777
Total	ERDF, Cohesion Fund, JTF, ESF+		12 593 734 933	2 871 749 819	15 465 484 752
OP Fisheries	EMFAF		15 225 428	6 525 184***	21 750 612

* The amount should include the flexibility amounts in accordance with Article 18 preliminary allocated. The actual allocation of the flexibility amounts will only be confirmed at the mid-term review.

** Programmes may be multi-fund in line with Article 25(1) (as priorities can be multi-fund in line with Article 22(2)). Whenever the JTF contributes to a programme, the JTF allocation needs to include complementary transfers and be split to present amounts in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 JTF Regulation.

*** Set so far in terms of legislation as a standard 70%. Only on the basis of the draft of OP Fisheries (and specific measures) it will be possible to allocate funds to individual measures, which are co-financed at different rates (80% to 20%, 90% to 10%, 75% to 25%)

¹ In case Article 36(4) technical assistance was chosen.

Table 8.2: List of planned Interreg programmes

Programme 1	Interreg VI Slovakia – Czechia
Programme 2	Interreg VI Slovakia – Austria*
Programme 3	Interreg VI Hungary – Slovakia
Programme 4	Interreg VI Poland – Slovakia
Programme 5	Interreg VI-A NEXT – Hungary – Slovakia – Romania - Ukraine
Programme 6	Danube Transnational Programme 2021 – 2027*
Programme 7	Interreg Central Europe Programme 2021 – 2027*
Programme 8	Interact IV
Programme 9	Interreg Europe
Programme 10	URBACT IV
Programme 11	ESPO 2030 Cooperation Programme

* the name of the program has not been decided yet

9. A summary of actions planned to reinforce administrative capacity of the implementation of the funds covered by the Partnership Agreement

Reference: point (i) of Article 11(1)

In the SR, administrative capacity (AC) and the level of project preparation constitute key factors of an efficient implementation of the EU Cohesion policy. In line with EC recommendation, referred to in Annex D of the Country Report Slovakia 2019, the Roadmap 2020+ on administrative capacities building³⁴ is the principal strategic document to enhance AC in 2021-2027 programming period. Based on the experience from the 2014-2020 programming period, the Roadmap lays down the objectives and measures ensuring quality human resources, functional implementation structures, and the creation of suitable instruments and processes facilitating smooth implementation during 2021-2027 programming period specifying responsibilities and measurable indicators for monitoring performance of set goals.

Indicative goals and basic focus of measures to strengthen AC:

Goal 1: Increase the level of human resources engaged in the management and implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy, with the emphasis on enhancing management of human resources, with focus on:

- Defining common principles and procedures for the strategic human resource planning, developing a plan to optimise human resources;
- Increasing the level of education of AC in the form of central planning and coordination, reflecting peculiarities of i priority axes, timely implementation of education for target groups, transition from passive

³⁴ More detail provided in Annex 6 – Executive Summary of the Roadmap on administrative capacities building for 2020+

to active learning, on-line learning, education on soft skills, flexibility of the education plan based on specific needs, development of information systems to support education registering and monitoring of AC;

- Stabilising the AC by creating a transparent and incentive system of remuneration based on quality performance of employees and entities with the emphasis on reducing fluctuation, deployment of modern motivation tools for AC;
- Capacity earmarking for continuous monitoring and analysis of the use of AC and of technical assistance resources focusing on resulting the programme's objectives, with view to adopt measures to boost an efficient management of AC and of the technical assistance resources.

Goal 2: Optimizing implementation structures for EU Funds:

- Reduction of the number of entities involved in the EU funds implementation at the national level;
- Optimizing of organizational structures at MA and IBs with the emphasis on clear division of competences and responsibilities in the implementation of EU Funds;
- Optimizing the number of standardized and non-standardized work positions, in line with fundamental processes of implementation cycle and experience from preceding programming period.

Goal 3: Simplification of implementation, reduction of the administrative burden and increase of transparency and awareness:

- "as simple as possible", as the basic principle for building legislative and implementation framework for 2021 - 2027 programming period;
- Regular and objective assessment of the administrative burden of applicants and beneficiaries to reduce the paperwork;
- Introduction of simplified cost options;
- Setting up the model of control including public procurement, with focus on reduction of the number of controls and streamlining the processes of public procurement;
- Consideration of the possibility of using the so-called Integrity Pacts for selected public procurement to ensure better transparency and accountability in public procurement;
- Regular and objective evaluation of duration of different processes in order to minimize the time necessary for the project implementation;
- Strengthening of measures for prevention of fraud and corruption in using public resources, strengthening the role of the body for the protection of the EU's financial interests by adopting more effective measures to prevent fraud (eg increase controls effectiveness, fraud risks monitoring, support for prevention and targeted education);
- Setting up an anti-corruption unit at the level of the MIRD SR, in order to strengthen prevention and fight against corruption, to reflect the state of play in tackling corruption;
- Introduction of effective awareness tools about support from the EU Funds, in order to increase transparency and trust of the public in the use of EU Funds.

Goal 4: Strengthening of capacities of regional and local government and a participatory approach in the field of planning, development and effective use of EU Funds:

- Continuation in the innovative approach in implementing partnership based on dynamic cooperation among regional and local stakeholders and the state administration in order to increase spending and strengthen territorial development (support of AC at the regional level - technical secretariats, support of AC at the level of SUD, including those engaged in MRC agenda);
- More intensive cooperation and engagement of socio-economic partners and providing regional support to entities that will participate in ensuring the implementation process (e.g., through counselling and raising awareness among the applicants and beneficiaries, promoting the creation and implementation of integrated territorial strategies, supporting analytical activities, monitoring, assessment and control);
- Support to partnership and cooperation with the civil society, including creation of cooperating structures between the public administration and NGOs in order to incorporate the broadest possible spectrum of partners from among NGOs and to utilise their specific skills in supporting the territorial development.

Goal 5: Strengthening the capacities in supporting Roma communities

- Establishing specific intermediate body at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic to ensure comprehensive use of funds allocated under ESF+ j) and ERDF iii).
- Strengthening of Roma Plenipotentiary personnel to ensure direct contact with municipalities;
- Further strengthen or at least maintain experts/assistants on the spot for provision of comprehensive targeted assistance in specific areas as education, social care services, social inclusion, health and general support for key stakeholders at community level; Strengthening the assistance to municipalities through enhancing

capacities of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities at regional level that includes operating the regional offices.

- Increasing of administrative capacity and financial support for Roma and pro Roma NGOs to improve the availability of services for MRCs at the regional level.

Goal 6: Strengthening of capacities of EMFAF implementation:

- Increasing of qualified internal AC for implementation of OP “Fisheries”;
- Ensuring the required level of AC experience through continuous training and strengthening the methodical guidance of AC;
- Stabilisation of AC by creating a transparent and incentive system of remuneration.

10. An integrated approach to address the demographic challenges and/or specific needs of regions and areas (where appropriate)

Reference: point (j) of Article 11(1) CPR and Article 10 ERDF/CF Regulation

ITI Implementation Mechanism

The origins of persistent regional disparities result from the unsuccessful concepts of eliminating disparities and reinforcements resulting from the current situation in Slovakia: the impact of the covid-pandemic, the onset of the economic recession, atypical and non-cyclical movements in energy and material prices (construction, IT components, etc.), negative demographic forecasts, including ageing and depopulation of specific regions, also huge technological changes, not only in the economy but in society as a whole.

Basic challenges to regional development mainly based on the National Regional Development Strategy are:

- Ensuring sustainable competitiveness and development of the economy focused on environment and innovations based on evaluation of specific territorial potentials in different regions (increase of the added value of the regional product and use of specific competitive advantages of regions of structural transformation of economy to innovation-oriented, use of the specific structure of available labour force in regional economy, completion of the infrastructure, innovation-based sustainable green economy, including ecologically acceptable transport, removal of collision points in transport and ensuring fluency of road transport, development of integrated transport systems, agriculture and services, strengthening of sustainability and resilience of regional economies on the basis of closing cycles basic industry-industrial production-distribution-consumption-return of the waste inside regions, reduction of the share of landfilling, ensuring household waste separation, use of specific potentials of regions for sustainable tourism, completion and development of tourism infrastructure, including integrated offers and management);
- Increase of the quality of life in all regions, effective and sustainable use of natural and human capital (discontinuation of the population decline and growth of the share of the labour force in the total population, improvement of the accessibility and quality of education of the population and harmonisation of outputs of the process and acquired competences and skills with existing expected demand in the labour market, improvement of the health condition and duration of the active life of the population, ensuring effective and sustainable management of human and natural resources, ensuring effective, affordable and high quality health, social and other services for the population, solution of specific problems in regions with high concentration of MRC or other types of disadvantages population structure, improvement of the environment condition, its components, development of adaptation and mitigation measures aimed at the climate change, sustainability of the use of forests, flood protection and removals of environmental burdens and industrial emission burdens, sustainable energy and use of renewable resources);
- Harmonisation of the regional and territorial development and community development and increase of the quality of life for all social groups by means of bringing the public administration to citizens, including the use of public funds and ensuring full application of principles of the rule of law as well as social inclusion and affordable, high quality and effective services (strengthening economic sustainability and resilience of communities of municipalities and regions, ensuring economic, social and environmental sustainability of modern and effective infrastructure, services and housing for healthy and full-fledged life of communities, strengthening of the development of individual specific territories (territories of sustainable urban development and strategic-planning regions) in the territory of a region based on specific potentials and problems addressed by specific strategies and tools of support to regional development).
- Support for active aging as a permanent political priority of the Government of the Slovak Republic within the strategy of building a sustainable society offering better opportunities for all is reflected in the National Program for Active Ageing for 2021-2030. Activities of support for active ageing will be aimed at supporting further education, accessible and quality health care, economic activity, performing socially beneficial activities, securing income in old age, as well as supporting the retention of dependent elderly people in the natural family environment for as long as possible and achieving the highest possible dignity, independence and quality in everyday life at all stages of the life cycle, including the phase of dependence on the help of another person.

The key territorial challenges and specific needs of each of 8 SK self-governing regions are identified in their Integrated Territorial Strategies.

In order to eliminate the negative trends, it is necessary to change the concept of support for regional development. Given the low ERDF absorption rate through the IROP in 2014-2020 as well as the low ability to address the underlying problem with persistent regional disparities, it was decided to build on the lessons of the best practices of other EU Member States and to adopt the territorial approach. The main regional policy instruments to address regional

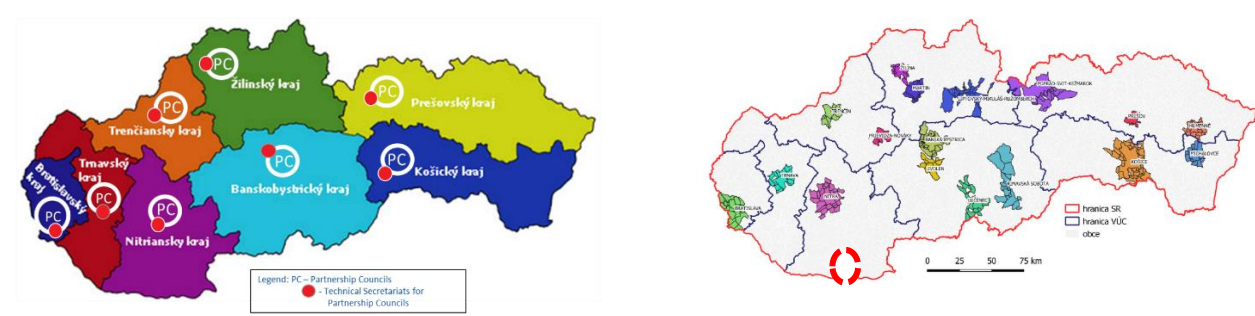
disparities are targeted strategies to support regional economies, i. e. integrated territorial strategies (ITS) on the basis of which integrated territorial investments (ITI) will be implemented. The aim of the ITS is to address the challenges of the territory comprehensively through all 5 cohesion policy objectives, as well as through the JTF and the Catching-up regions initiative. As a complementary instrument, measures in the territory will be supported from the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the community led local development (funding from EAFRD as part of the LEADER instrument).

Main purpose of ITIs is to provide the delivery arrangements for investment under more than one priority of the Programme Slovakia. The integrated territorial investment will be defined within the territorial strategies prepared by regional and local self-governments. Integrated territorial investment mechanisms allows the managing authority and intermediate bodies to delegate the implementation of parts of different priority to one Body (a local/regional authority) to ensure that investment are undertaken in a complementary manner. Investment integration is achieved at levels:

- Thematic – combining the activities under more than one priority
- Territorial integration – combining the activities regardless of the municipal borders
- Organisational – combining the activities of different stakeholders in the territory
- Financial – ITI can integrate the activities undertaken through CLLD or other mechanisms

With regard to the division of competencies in the field of regional development defined by Slovak legislation, 2 types of cooperation structures were created for the implementation of integrated territorial investment - one at the level of NUTS3 and one at the level of urban functional regions. These two structures are coordinated on regional level via Regional Partnership Councils, however preserving the implementation autonomy of the SUD mechanism.

<p>Distribution of Regional Partnership Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 HTU regions (NUTS3 level) - Cover 100 % of SR population 	<p>Distribution of SUD territories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17 FUAs³⁵ - Cover ca. 33% of SR population
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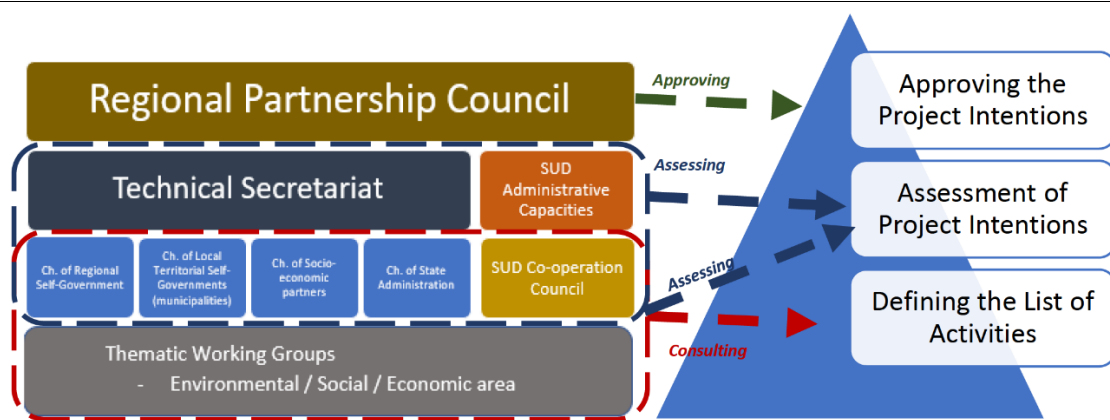


Governance structure is set in accordance to Article 29 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council. The implementation mechanism of ITI is based on the partnership principle and multilevel governance is applied mainly in the development, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ITI, performed in partnership particularly with representatives of local governments. Partnership Councils are the key institutional mechanism for setting territorial objectives at the regional level through ITS and their implementation in the Programme Slovakia. SUD Cooperation Councils are a key institutional mechanism for SUD territories.

All partnership councils consist of 4 chambers based on the type of entities, each with ¼ share of the Regional Partnership Council vote:

Thematic Working Groups form the working organizational framework, consisting of Regional Partnership Council members and external experts. Thematic Working Groups participate on elaboration of the ITS in the given thematic area, proposing activities and participate in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of ITI projects.

³⁵ The list of SUD territories may be slightly modified during negotiations of Programme Slovakia.



Integrated territorial strategy is the initial strategic document for the implementation of ITIs at the regional level. The strategies of individual self-governing regions define the key challenges and specific needs of these territories.

Pursuant to Article 29 of the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2021/1060 "Responsibility for the preparation of territorial strategies lies with the relevant municipal, local or other territorial authorities or bodies". The ITS is prepared as the regional strategy (Economic and social development plans) on the NUTS3 level integrating the SUD ITS which is prepared separately for the purpose of implementation of the SUD allocation.

Economic and social development plans (ESDP) consists of the analytical and strategic parts which are common with the ITS.

The subset of the ESDP programming part covering the preselected types of activities set aside for implementation via Regional Partnership Councils is the essential and decisive part of the ITS.

Implementation part of the ESDP describes the implementation mechanisms of the ITI for the selected activities as well as the implementation processes of other development programmes (CLLD, RRF, national grant schemes etc.)

Integrated territorial investment can be implemented as the individual project or complex projects. Key and complementary operations financed from the Programme Slovakia resources are considered as ITI. If additional operation from another resource is added (e.g. RRF, CLLD etc.), this is an integrated project package.

- Individual project is the territorial self-government project within one ITS priority (however covering more than 1 specific goal of Cohesion policy). Individual projects are perceived as the key activities that significantly contribute to the fulfillment of objectives of the territorial strategy.
- Complex project is the territorial self-government project consisting of selected complementary activities from several thematic packages under different ITS priorities. Complementary activities are those operations that are supportive to the key operation and increase the impact of the key operation in the territory. These are included in the so-called thematic project packages according to thematic focus.
 - o Combined project is specific type of complex project consisting also of the state administration activities. Combined project (state administrative component) needs to be approved by competent Line Ministry in Chamber of State administration

The implementation mechanism of ITI and the Regional Partnership governance structure have been created in close collaboration with regional partners within the special working groups consisting of the representatives of HTUs and their umbrella association, representatives of SUD core cities, representatives of Association of towns and municipalities and representatives of the Union of cities organized on the weekly basis.

Since the strategic framework of the regional/ municipal strategies could vary, the activities of the ITI will be classified according to the political and specific objectives of the Cohesion policy.

Due to the fact that 2 types of territorial cooperation structures were created, they are served by 2 types of administrative bodies providing support to implementation of regional ITIs (**technical secretariat**) or SUD ITIs (**SUD administrative capacities**).

Regional Centres as the integral part of the MIRDI SR represent the detached workplaces in the territory ensuring the performance of the MA competencies for the Programme Slovakia according to the management documentation for the programming period 2021-2027 (eg. On-the-spot check, control of monitoring reports, archiving) for entities out of ITI. In relation to ITI only the so called Quality check to be carried out. MIRDI SR establishes 7 regional centres in individual NUTS3 regions, with the exception of the Bratislava region.

The ITI preparation mechanism consists of 3 key levels, namely the level **of activities, project intentions and projects**. The ITI mechanism replaces the demand-oriented calls that were applied within the IROP in 2014-2020.

The preparation of territorial strategies and the definition of activities and project intentions through a democratic territorial dialogue within the Regional Partnership Council is an essential element for moving away from a demand-oriented implementation mechanism. Due to the reduction of the burden from the administrative actions of IB on the regional level, the significant time savings are expected in the implementation process

Where appropriate, the MIRDI through the Programme Slovakia will consider supporting investments that successfully combine the principles of sustainability, aesthetics and inclusiveness, following the example of the New European Bauhaus, in order to find affordable, inclusive, sustainable and attractive solutions to climate challenges.

Initiative Catching-up Regions (CURI) will focus on least developed regions. The subject-matter of the initiative is to address specific challenges by means of targeted investments to key areas, such as: vocational education and training, decentralised/alternative solutions for drinking water supply and waste water treatment, sustainable tourism, geodata collection and analysis, integration of health and social services, integration and digitalisation of transport systems, research and innovation potential, improvement of the quality of life of marginalised Roma communities and other areas defined in CURI action plans. The implementation and sustainability of these activities will be ensured by individual regions through the ITS.

Integrated approach to address MRC inclusion

Given the experience and lessons learnt from 14 – 20 programming period, the implementation of activities to support MRC in 21 – 27 period will be ensured through **combining various activities at the level of the separate priority as well as at the level of PO 2, 3, 4, 5 as specified below**.

All specified activities are linked to the **Strategy for Equal Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030 and its action plans. The Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030** was created on the basis of a national requirement for conceptual material that takes into account developments and experience from the previous eight years since the establishment of the Slovak Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020 and relevant action plans.

The National Strategy represents a set of starting points and goals that aim to stop the segregation of Roma communities, a significant positive turnaround in the social inclusion of Roma, non-discrimination, change attitudes and improve coexistence.

Regular European and national evaluations continue to state that the four priority areas - **employment, education, health and housing** - remain key to meeting the objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on **non-discrimination** and intensified interventions in the **fight against anti-Roma racism**. The global and sub-objectives of each priority are developed in the respective **5 action plans**, each for three years including measures and activities with a realistic quantification of the necessary financial requirements and identified appropriate resources to cover them and responsible implementation bodies.

Action Plans that are elaborated at national level:

- Action Plan on Employment,
- Action Plan on Education,
- Action Plan on Health,
- Action Plan on Housing,
- Action Plan on Fight against anti-Roma racism.

Given the lessons learnt and in particular due to the long term unsuccessful project application assessment and management verification in demand-driven calls for proposal for ERDF projects in the 2014-2020 period, SR assumes **a preference for National projects/strategic projects** in the programming period 2021-2027. More than half of the allocation will be used for National projects for selected municipalities where complex solutions will be achieved (both ESF and ERDF source). The remaining amount will be allocated to demand-driven calls for other municipalities identified in Atlas of Roma Communities 2019 or NGOs.

A) Level of the separate priority

Activities under specific objectives ESF+ j) and ERDF iii) will be aimed to support the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities. The approach will combine both ESF+ and ERDF resources within a separate PRIORITY in Programme Slovakia. **A comprehensive approach in addressing outstanding challenges in selected MRC localities will link soft measures and hard investments defined in Roma Strategy and its action plans in order to achieve expected results and targets.** Interventions will be implemented outside ITS mechanism. Implementation mechanism/Governance is specified in part 2.2.

For each priority area within the separate priority, the source for the selection of municipalities will be the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019 and its updates or a combination of the current version and its updates in order to maintain the eligibility of applicants.

In order to ensure sound and correct implementation of interventions towards MRC and based on lessons learnt from CuRI a pilot national project of the development teams will be launched. Community development plans will be a part of the pilot project. Plans will include the complex solutions for the whole municipality including non-Roma majority as a prerequisite for combining the soft and hard investments in the locality. It is envisaged to support selected municipalities through the comprehensive approach. At the same time, municipalities will be supported in their administrative capacities and in overall assistance. Soft investments will include operation of helping professions according to real needs of municipality giving support in the areas such as housing, employment, social affairs, health, early child care and pre-primary education and mediation between majority and Roma population.

B) Level of PO 2, 3, 4, 5

In order to strengthen the interventions in MRC, the activities under specific objectives ESF+ j) and ERDF iii) will be **linked with activities under policy objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5.** This is to support the MRC in horizontal themes of other specific objectives. (e.g. education, employment, social affairs, health, drinking water, waste, local roads, etc.). Concrete activities and related allocations are specified in the Programme Slovakia.

Indicative activities under policy objectives 2, 3, 4 to support the socio-economic integration of MRC

PO 2: In order to support the socio-economic integration of MRC under policy objective 2, the activities will be aimed at improving the availability of safe drinking water and wastewater management in municipalities with the presence of MRCs.

Activities will be supported in order to promote implementation of infrastructure in the field of wastewater drainage and treatment in agglomerations below 2,000 PE in the Catching-up regions; ensure access drinking water and municipal wastewater management in municipalities up to 2,000 PE in the Catching-up regions; renewal of public sewerage network and wastewater treatment plants in agglomerations above 2,000 EO as well as renewal of public water supply networks in municipalities above 2,000 inhabitants.

PO 3: Modernization and construction of 2nd and 3rd class roads will also be supported in municipalities with the presence of marginalized Roma communities in order to increase the quality of mobility, services in the territory and increase the road traffic safety. Emphasis will also be placed on the construction or modification of safe local roads in municipalities with the presence of marginalized Roma communities.

PO 4

Active inclusion: The target group of MRC members will be also supported within the specific objectives under the responsibility of the MLSAF SR and MH SR.

Interventions to support the socio-economic integration of MRC will be implemented in the areas as deinstitutionalisation of facilities and services; active inclusion; long-term care system; community centres; implementation of community health promotion for MRC members, i.e. health mediation, assistance and disease prevention and implementation of health promotion in the hospital environment, etc.

Education: The target group of MRC members will be supported within all specific objectives under the responsibility of the MoEdu. Under **specific objective e)**, this support will not be explicitly defined as aimed exclusively (predominantly) at this target group, but will be an integral part of this support and will benefit from it.

All proposed activities co-financed through ESF+ under **specific objective f)** under two priorities: "Quality, inclusive education" and "Youth Guarantee" are relevant for the support of the MRC. Both of these priorities reflect the primary educational needs of vulnerable groups (such as participants of educational activities from MRC, but also people with disabilities and others).

MRC members will also be supported under the **specific objective g)** within the priority "Skills for Better Adaptability and Inclusion", as the aim of this priority is to strengthen the inclusiveness of adult learning and improve learning pathways for all, including low-skilled adults.

Activities proposed to be financed from ERDF under the **specific objective ii)** are intended for schools and school facilities, including those in localities with MRC.

The activities are linked to the draft Strategy for Inclusive Education of the SR until 2030 and the draft Action Plan Education (2022-2024) of Strategy for Equal Inclusion and Roma Participation until 2030 as well as to the Strategy for Lifelong Learning and Counselling until 2030 and the RRP.

PO 5: In order to support the socio-economic integration of MRC under policy objective 5, the activities will be aimed at safe physical environment of municipalities, cities and regions.

C) Complementarity and synergy towards the investments addressed through the planned activities through ITS

Ensuring compliance of ITS interventions with national priorities, the Strategy for Equality, Participation and Inclusion of Roma by 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy 2030) and the priorities of the OP.

Persisting challenge in supporting MRC for 21 -27 PP is to start the **land settlement** procedure in all relevant municipalities. Due to complicated situation in this area, the number of the consolidated ownership solutions must reflect the reality and objective but also subjective barriers on the side of future owners. For 21 – 27 PP the ambition is to continue with projects for land settlement from ESF+ and to consider possibility to use ERDF funds (land purchase). Complex challenges of land settlements and illegal constructions in the MRC territories will be addressed in Slovakia by following measures:

- In order to ensure effective comprehensive measures related to the land settlements including the legislation, the SR will elaborate in 2022 the Action Plan.
- New Construction Act

11. A summary of the assessment of the fulfilment of relevant enabling conditions referred to in Article 15 and Annexes III and IV (optional)

Reference: Article 15

Table 11.1: Enabling conditions

Enabling condition / criteria	Fund	Selected specific objective (N/A to the EMFAF)	Summary of the assessment

Information on the fulfillment of the relevant enabling conditions will be part of the Programme Slovakia.

12. Preliminary climate contribution target

Reference: Article 6(2) and point (d) of Article 11(1)

Fund	Preliminary climate contribution *
ERDF	2 115 390 900
CF	1 082 131 241

* Corresponding to information included or to be included in programmes as a result of the types of intervention and the indicative financial breakdown pursuant to point (d)(viii) of Article 22(3).

List of abbreviations

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CF	Cohesion Fund
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
CZ	Czech Republic
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EDP	Entrepreneurial Discovery Process
EEC	European Economic Community
EGD	European Green Deal
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
ERA	European Research Area
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund plus
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
EU	European Union
FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HU	Hungary
IT	Information Technology
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
ITMS	IT Monitoring System
ITS	Integrated Territorial Strategy
JTF	Just Transition Fund
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de le Économie Rurale (Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy)
MA	Managing Authority
MARD SR	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic
MIRDI SR	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
MRC	Marginalised Roma Communities
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PL	Poland
PO	Policy Objective
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
RIS3	Research and Innovation for Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Slovak Republic
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Plan
SMEs	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SR	The Slovak Republic
TA	Technical Assistance
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network