

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

• INTERNATIONAL CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Coordination of environmental activities in Slovakia and the European Union

Coordination of the SR strategy within the EU for the area of environment is supervised by the MoE SR. Ministerial coordination group for environment oversees the first stage of coordination. Ministerial coordination group for environment approved positions for negotiations of task force groups of the European Council on environment, made comments to the proposed instructions prepared for the Joint Committee on European affairs 1, as well as to the proposed mandate for representing Slovakia at the level of the European Council on environment.

Cooperation of the Vysegrad group

On September 18 - 19, 2008, the **15th meeting of the Vysegrad group (V4) Ministers of environment** was organised in Budapest. The ministers exchanged experiences related to the EU legislative instruments used to reduce CO₂ emissions from motor vehicles. Further, they discussed the issue of illegal waste transport between the member countries, the issue of "green taxes", and got acquainted with each other's positions at negotiations on future obligations of countries in the area of reducing the greenhouse gases emissions and implementation of the climate-energy package.

Multilateral cooperation

The major conference organised in 2008 included the **14th conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on climate change**, and the **4th meeting of the Kyoto Protocol parties** that took place **December 1-2, 2008 in Poznan**. Slovakia was given moral recognition for supporting further activities of the Expert group for the transfer of technologies for the years 2008 and 2009.

Another major conference was the **9th conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological diversity in Bonn (May 19 - 30, 2008)** where the countries' representatives agreed to substantially reduce the loss of biological diversity in the course of the two following years.

Slovakia acceded to the Protocol on the Register of pollutants and their transfer (the PRTR Protocol) - document on the accession of Slovakia was put on file on April 1, 2008. Slovakia ratified

also amendments and annexes to the UN EEC Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. (Document on ratification put on file on April 1, 2008).

On May 29, 2008, Slovakia ratified the Protocol on strategic environmental assessment under the UN EEC Convention on Trans-boundary environmental impact assessment that was ratified by Slovakia in 1999. In relation to the mentioned convention, Slovakia adopted Annex 1 and 2. (Document on adoption put on file on May 29, 2008)

Bilateral cooperation

During November 24 - 27, 2008, a 6-member delegation from the Republic of China, lead by the deputy to the minister of water resources, Zhou Ying, visited Slovakia. Aim of the visit was to exchange information in the area of water resource management, including their exploitation and protection, getting acquainted with implementation of the Framework Directive on waters, and extension of the Memorandum of understanding between the Slovak Ministry of Environment and the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources.

• PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

PHARE - National Programme

The years of 2008 and 2009 are the last years of implementation of the projects funded from the PHARE programme. 3 projects were completed in 2008 under the PHARE - Transition Fund 2007:

- **TF 2005/017-464.06.01 - Determination of environmental quality standard values for water and strengthening of regional and circuit environment authorities to implement water control and monitoring** - twinning. Total financial volume 2 016 400 €
- **TF UIBF 2005/017-464.08.01 - Development of national concept for determining water quality in lowland rivers, in line with the Framework Directive on water, with the use of phytoplankton, and a proposal to monitor phyto-benthos** - twinning light. Total financial volume 120 000 €
- **TF UIBF 2005/017-464.08.01 - Completion of the information system for environmental impact assessment - part of strategic environmental evaluation** - technical assistance. Total financial volume of 147 000 €

These last three projects will be completed in 2009:

- **TF UIBF 2006/018-175.06.01 - Implementation of the European Parliament and Council Directive 2006/21/EC on management of waste from the extractive industries** - technical assistance. Total financial volume of 210 000 €
- **TF UIBF 2006/018-175.06.01 - Strategy for record keeping and collection of devices with the PCB content below 5 dm³ in Slovakia.** Total financial volume of 130 000 €
- **TF UIBF 2006/018-175.06.01 - Information system on water designated for human consumption.** Total financial volume of 150 000 €

The Operational programme of Basic Infrastructure, ISPA, Cohesion Fund - 1st Programme period

The Operational programme of Basic Infrastructure (OP ZI) designates areas for using the financial assistance from the EU funds, directly from the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**. Slovak MoE for this period acted as a mediator for the supervising authority (MCaRD of the SR) within the OP ZI Priority 2 of the Environmental Infrastructure, which is one of its three priorities. Each priority is divided into a number of measures. In case of Priority the measures include the following:

2.1 Improvement and development of the water protection and rational exploitation infrastructure

2.2 Improvement and development of the air protection infrastructure

2.3 Improvement and development of the waste management infrastructure

2.4 Protection, improvement, and regeneration of the natural environment.

As of **December 31, 2008**, the Slovak Ministry of Environment registered **467 applications** for non-refundable financial contribution under Priority 2: OP ZI Environmental infrastructure.

	Registered applications	Approved applications	
		number	financial contribution (€)
Measure 2.1	172	74	70 408 652.75
Measure 2.2	67	35	54 989 773.68
Measure 2.3	149	63	33 590 761.25
Measure 2.4	51	26	8 010 765.04

As of **December 31, 2008**, the Minister of environment **approved**, based on the recommendation of the selection committee (Environmental Project Board), **198 applications** for non-refundable financial contribution. Of this number, **agreements** have already been **made** with **198 applicants** for granting a non-refundable financial contribution.

During the period of 2000-2006, Slovakia was receiving the EC assistance under the **ISPA** programme (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession) As of December 31, 2008, this programme supported 22 large projects in the area of building the environmental infrastructure, at total sum of 316 566 370 €

As of December 31, 2008, the **Cohesion fund (CF)** as a successor of the ISPA programme funded 7 projects dealing with the environmental infrastructure, at total sum of 298 983 765 €

Operational programme of Environment - II. Programming period of 2007-2013

Operational programme of Environment (OPE) is the programming document for Slovakia in order for using the EU funds in the area of environment for the years of 2007-2013. Slovak Ministry of Environment is the supervisory body. OPE supports projects that aim at improvement of the environment through the following priority axes:

Priority axis 1: Integrated protection and rational water exploitation

Priority axis 2: Flood protection

Priority axis 3: Air protection and minimisation of adverse impacts of climate change

Priority axis 4: Waste management

Priority axis 5: Protection and regeneration of natural environment and landscape

Volume of funds allocated for individual Environmental nature protection Priority axes

	Allocated funds (€)	
	Total	of which
Priority axis 1: (water)	1 077 227 136	Cohesion fund 915 643 065 State budget 161 584 071
Priority axis 2: (floods)	141 176 471	Cohesion fund 120 000 000 State budget 21 176 471
Priority axis 3: (air)	211 764 706	ERDF 180 000 000 State budget 31 764 706
Priority axis 4: (waste)	570 588 235	Cohesion fund 485 000 000 State budget 85 588 235
Priority axis 5: (nature and landscape)	59 714 041	ERDF 50 756 935 State budget 8 957 106

Source: MoE SR

As of December 31, 2008, the Slovak Ministry of Environment issued **17 calls** for applications for non-refundable financial benefit (NRFB), with total allocated sum of 465 472 017 €. As of the mentioned date, of **446 registered applications** for NRFB with the total applied-for sum of 904 912 891 €, the Selection committee at the Slovak Ministry of Environment for the ERDF and CF projects **approved** 114 applications for NRFB in the sum of 189 330 673 €. As of December 31, 2008, 48 projects were **signed** for the sum of 58 510 635 €, of which 51 301 389 € come from the EU funds. 43 projects are being implemented; none of them has been completed.

Result of the published calls as of December 31, 2008

Priority axis	Number of approved projects	Sum of approved non-refundable financial contributions (in thous. €)			% of total allocation of the Environmental Operation Programme	Allocation balance (structural funds/cohesion funds + state budget)
		Total	including			
			structural funds/cohesion funds	State budget		
1 Integrated protection and rational water exploitation	6	20 878	17 959	2 919	1.94	1 056 349
2 Flood protection	16	14 525	12 995	1 530	10.29	126 651
3 Air protection and minimisation of adverse impacts of climate change	14	30 727	26 284	4 443	14.51	181 038
4 Waste management	67	113 842	99 849	13 993	19.95	456 746
5 Protection and regeneration of natural environment and landscape	11	9 359	7 956	1 403	15.67	50 355

Slovak Ministry of Environment also received 22 project concepts of large projects, including 21 addressing the operational objectives of 1.1 (drinking water), and 1.2 (WWTP and sewage) with anticipated total cost at 1 195 728 946.23 € and 1 project concept of a large project for the operational objective 2.1 (flood prevention measures) with anticipated total costs amounting to 76 177 620.66 €

Central Europe Operational Programme

MoE SR is the **national authority** for the programme. On March 3, 2008, **first call for the submission of projects** within the OP SE scheme was opened, with the leading partners submitting the total of 95 applications for non-refundable financial contribution, and the Slovak project partners being involved in 44 projects, including three projects where they assumed the role of project leading partners.

In total, 29 project applications were approved under the first call for proposals, amounting to 66.8 mil. € from the ERDF, while co-funding from public sources represents 15.1 mil. € and co-funding from private sources is 2.2 mil. €

South-eastern Europe Operational Programme

For Slovakia, the whole national territory is eligible for this programme. Institutions at the national, regional, and local level may apply. Total financial allocation for Slovakia for OP JvE for the period of 2007-2013 represents **9.896 mil. €** Rate of co-funding from the ERDF for the Slovak project partners represents 85 % of total justifiable expenditures for their implemented activities within the project.

National Development Agency in Budapest was appointed the **managing authority** for the OP JvE. Slovak Ministry of Environment is the **national authority** for OP JvE.

First call for the submission of project proposals was opened on May 5, 2008 as part of the programme. Within the total number of 1 099 submitted project proposals, of which 700 passed through the formal control, there were 202 Slovak project partners, included 17 who took the role of leading project partners.

As of 31.12.2008, the process of assessment and selection of project proposals was not completed.

LIFE and LIFE+ Programme

Slovak Republic has been participating in the LIFE programme since 2002. In total, 11 projects at the total sum of 13 718 193 € were approved, including the LIFE programme contribution of 5 994 084 € The European Commission carries out monitoring of the programme and projects, with the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia being the national organisation for the programme.

Programme LIFE+ is a continuation of the successful LIFE programme. Overall programme budget for the years 2007-2013 is 2.143 bill. € including at least 78 % designated directly for funding projects and at least half of this package is designed to fund projects in the area of Nature and Biodiversity In 2007, allocation for Slovakia was 2 857 mil. € in 2008 it was 3 171 mil. € and in 2009 it is 3.83 mil. € and each subsequent year the sum will rise slightly and exceed 4 mil. € annually. Out of 5 project proposals submitted in 2008, 3 were approved at the EC level.

INTERREG III B CADSES

The MoE of the SR is the national organisation for Slovakia, active within the Community Initiative Programme CIP INTERREG IIIB CADSES.

A call for submitting applications for a non-repayable financial contribution from the state budget was published on November 16, 2006. As of **31. 12. 2008**, 17 project applications were submitted for a non-repayable financial contribution from the state budget with total volume of the state budget requested funds at 1 015 228 €(30 584 766 SKK). At the meeting of the INTERREG IIIB CADSES steering committee, 14 project applications were approved in total as of December 31, 2008, with total volume of 693 296 €(20 886 237.68 SKK) of the state budget funds to be disbursed.

GEF - Global Environmental Facility

In the period of July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2010, a new programming period has started for the Global Environment Facility initiative (GEF 4), with the priority areas narrowed down to **climate changes and biodiversity**. In the area of Biodiversity, Slovakia was placed in a group of 93 countries with an average allocation per country up to 3.5 mil. USD by 2010. In the area of Climate changes, Slovakia was assigned an individual allocation of 5.7 mil. USD by 2010.

During 2008, two new national projects were under preparation. Slovak organizations continue to participate in fourteen international projects, with 3 other international projects being currently in preparation.

EEA mechanism/ Norwegian financial mechanism (NFM)

Based on the agreement between the EU countries and the EFTA countries, in the period of May 1 to April 30, 2009, Norway, Island, and Lichtenstein will offer Slovakia and other countries a financial assistance of total annual volume of 13.36 mil. € Over the period of five years, Slovakia is to receive the total sum of 67 mil. € Government Office of the Slovak Republic has become the national contact point for the implementation of the EEA financial mechanism and the Norwegian financial mechanism in Slovakia

Swiss Financial Mechanism

For the period of five years, the Swiss confederation agreed to release funds amounting to 1 billion Swiss Franks, which is approximately 616 mil. € The distribution key shows that Slovakia has been allocated the funds in the volume of 66 866 000 Swiss Franks, which is approximately 41 mil. € Government Office of the Slovak Republic has become the national contact point for the Swiss financial mechanism in Slovakia. In the course of the year 2008 no call for project proposals was yet published.