

Annex 1: Conceptual Framework of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme

The Conceptual Framework is an integral part of the Framework Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Slovak Republic concerning the implementation of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme. The Conceptual Framework defines objectives, principles, strategies, geographic and thematic focus as well as indicative financial allocations.

1. Objectives

The Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme pursues two objectives:

- To contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities between the Slovak Republic and the more advanced countries of the enlarged European Union (EU); and
- To contribute within the Slovak Republic to the reduction of economic and social disparities between the dynamic urban centres and the structurally weak peripheral regions.

The Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme includes national and trans-national Projects that support a sustainable, economically and socially balanced development.

Towards the end of the implementation period of the Swiss Contribution, both Parties may jointly decide on a global evaluation of the results achieved by the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

2. Principles

The Swiss-Slovak cooperation is guided by the following principles:

Transparency. Transparency and openness are key to all cooperation activities and are binding at all levels. Special emphasis shall be given to transparency in project selection, contract awarding and financial management.

Social inclusion. Cooperation activities aim at including socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and groups in the opportunities and benefits of development.

Equal opportunities and rights. No discrimination on the grounds of gender, family status, racial or ethnic origin, faith or belief, health condition, age or sexual orientation shall be permitted at any stage of the implementation of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

Environmental sustainability. Cooperation activities aim at incorporating requirements of environmental sustainability.

Commitment by all stakeholders. All institutions and decision-makers involved in the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme are committed to an efficient and effective implementation of the agreed Projects.

Subsidiarity and decentralisation. Cooperation activities aim at including considerations of subsidiarity and decentralisation primarily in Projects at the municipal and regional levels.

3. Strategies

3.1 Main Strategic Considerations

The Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme is part of a comprehensive national development planning that includes the structural and cohesion programmes of the EU as well as the programmes of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the EEA Financial Mechanism. The Contribution shall be complementary to these programmes and mainly focus on Projects that are not or only partially covered by these financial sources.

Main strategic considerations include:

a. Focusing. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Swiss Federal Council and the Council of the European Union defines four funding guidelines for the Contribution:

- Security, stability and support for reforms;
- Environment and infrastructure;
- Promotion of the private sector; and
- Human and social development.

These funding guidelines and the related focus areas provide a broad base for cooperation. Efficiency and effectiveness considerations as well as concern for the optimal allocation and use of available resources, are important. Therefore, the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme shall have a clear strategic focus, guided by the following considerations:

- Concentration on a maximum of eight focus areas in which at least 70% of the Contribution shall be spent (thematic concentration). According to the Memorandum of Understanding the selection of the focus areas will be based on the needs of the Slovak Republic and may take specific Swiss know-how into account.
- Concentration on the least developed NUTS-II region in which at least 40% of the Contribution shall be spent (geographic concentration).
- Concentration on a relatively small number of Projects.

b. Programme approach. A programme consists of component projects linked by a common theme or shared objectives. A programme approach shall be applied in focus areas which display several of the following characteristics: large financial Commitments; linking of different levels (national, regional, local); variety of actors; contribution to policy development; significant contributions to capacity building; and application of a common set of rules and procedures. A programme approach implies a delegated authority for decision-making on individual projects. A programme approach includes: an initial assessment of the focus area; the definition of objectives, guidelines and budgets; a programme implementation plan; and a sector monitoring and evaluation concept. To assure efficiency and effectiveness, the contribution to a specific programme shall represent a minimum amount of CHF 4 million.

c. Individual project approach. An individual project approach shall be applied in a focus area in which stand-alone projects shall be implemented. To assure efficiency and effectiveness, the contribution for each project under the individual project approach shall represent in general a minimum amount of CHF 1 million. Higher minimal financial volumes may be agreed upon (see Chapter 5 of this Annex). Block Grant financing may provide a means to accommodate smaller projects (see Annex 3).

d. Trans-national Projects. The Contribution may be used to finance trans-national Projects.

e. Partners and beneficiaries. The Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme shall include partners and beneficiaries from the public and private sectors, non-governmental organisations and other civil society organisations.

f. Partnerships. Partnerships between Swiss and Slovak partners are an enriching element of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme. Cooperation and partnerships are strongly encouraged, especially in focus areas in which Switzerland may contribute particular experience, know-how and technologies.

g. Flexibility. Flexibility and the possibility to react to opportunities require that initially only about 80% of the Contribution shall be allocated to particular focus areas and special items. Within two and four years from the entering into force of the Agreement, the progress in the supported priority areas shall be evaluated. The Slovak Republic shall draft the proposal to redirect the initial un-disbursed financial allocations as necessary and to re-commit the unallocated funds of about 20% of the Contribution. The proposal shall be a subject of discussion at the annual meeting.

h. Visibility. Visibility of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme for Slovak and Swiss citizens is an important aspect that may be taken into account when selecting and implementing Projects. Both Parties undertake to inform proactively on their cooperation.

3.2 Implementation Strategies

a. Identifying Projects. Project identification significantly impacts the quality of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme. The Slovak Republic is responsible for the selection of Projects to be financed by the Contribution. Switzerland can suggest to the Slovak Republic Project proposals.

b. Setting Project selection criteria. Project selection shall be based on a clear set of criteria. General selection criteria shall include:

- Responsiveness to the objectives of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme;
- Adherence to the principles of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme described in Chapter 2 of this Annex;
- Responsiveness to the strategic considerations outlined in Chapter 3.1 of this Annex;
- Anchoring in the national development planning and, if possible, the National Strategic Reference Framework and the respective Operational Programme(s);
- Innovation and/or the potential to offer new solutions that can be applied subsequently on a larger scale (pilot Projects);
- Capacity of the Executing Agency and the Intermediate Body;
- Leverage potential (mobilisation of additional resources);
- Feasibility in the given time-span; and
- Sustainability of results.

Specific selection criteria for each focus area may be formulated prior to starting the implementation of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

c. Supporting Project planning. Project preparation and detailed Project planning are of paramount importance for efficiency and effectiveness in Project implementation. Preparation support may be requested by the Slovak Republic or recommended by Switzerland and shall be financed either through the Project Preparation Facility (see Annex 3) or as an integral part of Project financing.

d. Enhancing implementation capacities. Successful Project implementation depends on the capacities of the implementing and monitoring organisations. If need be, capacity enhancement may be requested by the Slovak Republic or recommended by Switzerland and may be financed by the Contribution as an integral part of Project financing.

4. Geographic Focus

The geographic focus of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme will be set on the territory of the Slovak Republic taking into account that at least 40% of the Contribution shall be spent in the region at the level of NUTS-II with the lowest GDP per capita within the three last published years (2002, 2003 and 2004). Based on this measure, the geographic focus will be set in the East Slovak Region (see 3.1a).

5. Thematic Focus and Indicative Financial Allocations *

The following thematic focus and indicative financial allocations shall apply to the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme:

1. Security, Stability and Support for Reforms			
N°	Focus areas	Approach, objectives and eligible Projects	Indicative financial allocation (in million CHF)
1	Regional development initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions	<p><u>Individual Project or programme approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To mobilize local and regional development potentials in the geographic focus area.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism planning at regional and district level - Mobilisation of tourism potentials, primarily in eco-tourism, sports, cultural heritage, etc. - Strengthening and improving social services, social inclusion, the fight against poverty, measure social-law protection, social guardianship and social economy 	Up to 8.495
2	Prevention and management of natural disasters	<p><u>Individual Project or programme approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To strengthen management of natural disasters in Slovak Republic.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building-up, strengthening and preparing capacities and bodies handling work in 	Up to 3.31915

* Modified on 8 December 2011

		<p>disaster area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating of mobile centres for managing forces and equipments by intervention in areas affected by disaster - Modernisation of material and technical equipment of stationary and also mobile monitoring and detecting technology in case of chemical and radiating threat 	
3	Strengthening institutions and capacity for combating corruption and organised crime	<p><u>Individual Project or programme approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To enhance the effective fight against corruption and organised crime</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building-up a common infrastructure of Customs Directorate SR and Ministry of Interior SR - The supply of technologies for high security communication - Strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Justice and / or the Ministry of Interior (Police Forces) of the Slovak Republic 	Up to 6.584

2. Environment and Infrastructure			
N°	Focus areas	Approach, objectives and eligible Projects	Indicative financial allocation (in million CHF)
4	<p>Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure</p> <p>and</p> <p>Improvement of the environment</p>	<p><u>Individual project approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To enhance municipal infrastructure services to increase living standards and promote economic development.</p> <p>A minimum of 30% of the amount allocated to this thematic focus area shall be used for Projects in the geographical focus area.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <p>Projects of a minimum value of CHF 3 million in the field of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable water and wastewater management, focusing preferably on municipal wastewater treatment. <p>Projects of a minimum value of CHF 2 million in the field of:</p>	Up to 27.009879

		- Waste management: municipal solid waste management and disposal of hazardous waste.	
5	Nature protection	<p><u>Individual project approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To protect nature sources and the functioning of eco-systems in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and regeneration of natural environment and landscapes primarily in the geographic focus area with a special attention to NATURA 2000 and Carpathian Convention - Monitoring and research of forest ecosystems (improvement of instrumentation and other technical equipment) 	Up to 4.16

3. Private sector			
N°	Focus areas	Approach, objectives and eligible Projects	Indicative financial allocation (in million CHF)
6	Development of the private sector and promotion of exports of SMEs	<p><u>Individual projects and block grants approach with the following objective:</u></p> <p>To increase the market shares of Slovak exports of goods and services.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of quality standards (technical, environmental, phytosanitary, etc.) - Promotion of e-business application and e-security in the business sector 	Up to 0.000

4. Human and Social Development			
N°	Focus areas	Approach, objectives and eligible Projects	Indicative financial allocation (in million CHF)
7	Research and development	<p><u>Objective:</u></p> <p>To strengthen the scientific potential through enhanced access to education and through selective promotion programmes.</p> <p>Types of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scholarship Fund for advanced degree and post-graduation programmes in Switzerland 	Up to 3.000
8	Technical and Vocational Training	<p><u>Individual project or programme approach with the following objective</u></p> <p>To link school leavers profiles with labour market needs and to adjust school leavers skills and competencies to knowledge society needs.</p> <p>Eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development or updating of occupational profiles (EQF) - Creation or adaptation of local training capacities to foster or stimulate local economic development - Shift from input driven to outcome driven VET (knowledge, skills, competencies) - To develop know-how for labour market forecasting for early skills of recognition 	Up to 3.885

5. Special Allocations		
Item	Content	Indicative financial allocation (in million CHF)
Block Grant	<p><u>Objective:</u> To promote civil society's contribution to economic and social cohesion as important actors of development and participation.</p> <p>Type of eligible projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Block Grant(s) for the civil society/NGOs contributing primarily to social service provision as well as environmental concerns, allowing to strengthen organisational capacities 	Up to 3.000
Twinning Block Grant	<p><u>Objective:</u> To promote and/or enhance partnerships between institutions, municipalities and regions of the Slovak Republic and Switzerland on the national level.</p> <p>Types of eligible Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Block Grant for the financing of small joint projects in the frame of partnerships 	Up to 2.510901
Project Preparation Facility	<p><u>Objective:</u> To support the preparation of final project proposals</p>	0.55207
Swiss Programme Management	Swiss administration of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme (Article 5.4 of this Agreement).	3.350
Slovak Technical Assistance	Slovak administration of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme including preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation.	Up to 1.000

Overview on the Indicative Allocations	
Funding guidelines	Indicative financial allocation (million CHF)
1. Security, Stability and support to Reforms	18.39815
2. Environment and Infrastructure	31.169879
3. Private sector	0.000
4. Human and Social Development	6.885
5. Special Allocations	10.412971
6. Not yet allocated	0.000
Total indicative allocations	66.866

The not yet allocated amount of 0.000 million CHF shall be used for highly ranked priority Projects to be approved, which cannot be financed by the available balance of the respective Focus area. Unused balances of Focus areas shall be added to this unallocated amount once all the final decisions on the Final Project Proposals in the respective Focus area have been taken. The allocation of the unallocated funds shall be done by mutual agreement (e.g. confirmed in the minutes of meetings or by correspondence) between the NCU and SDC/SECO in the course of the operational implementation of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.